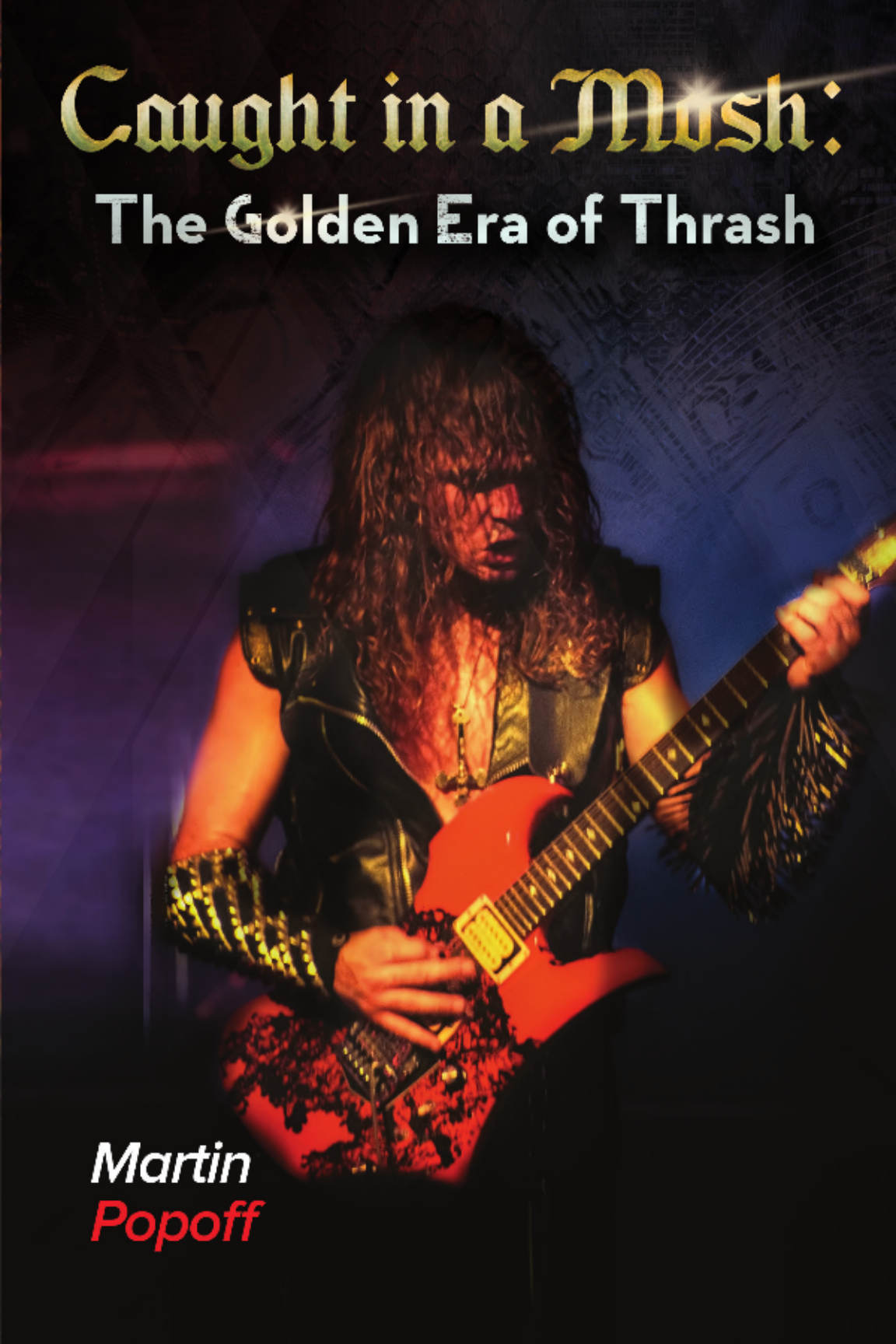
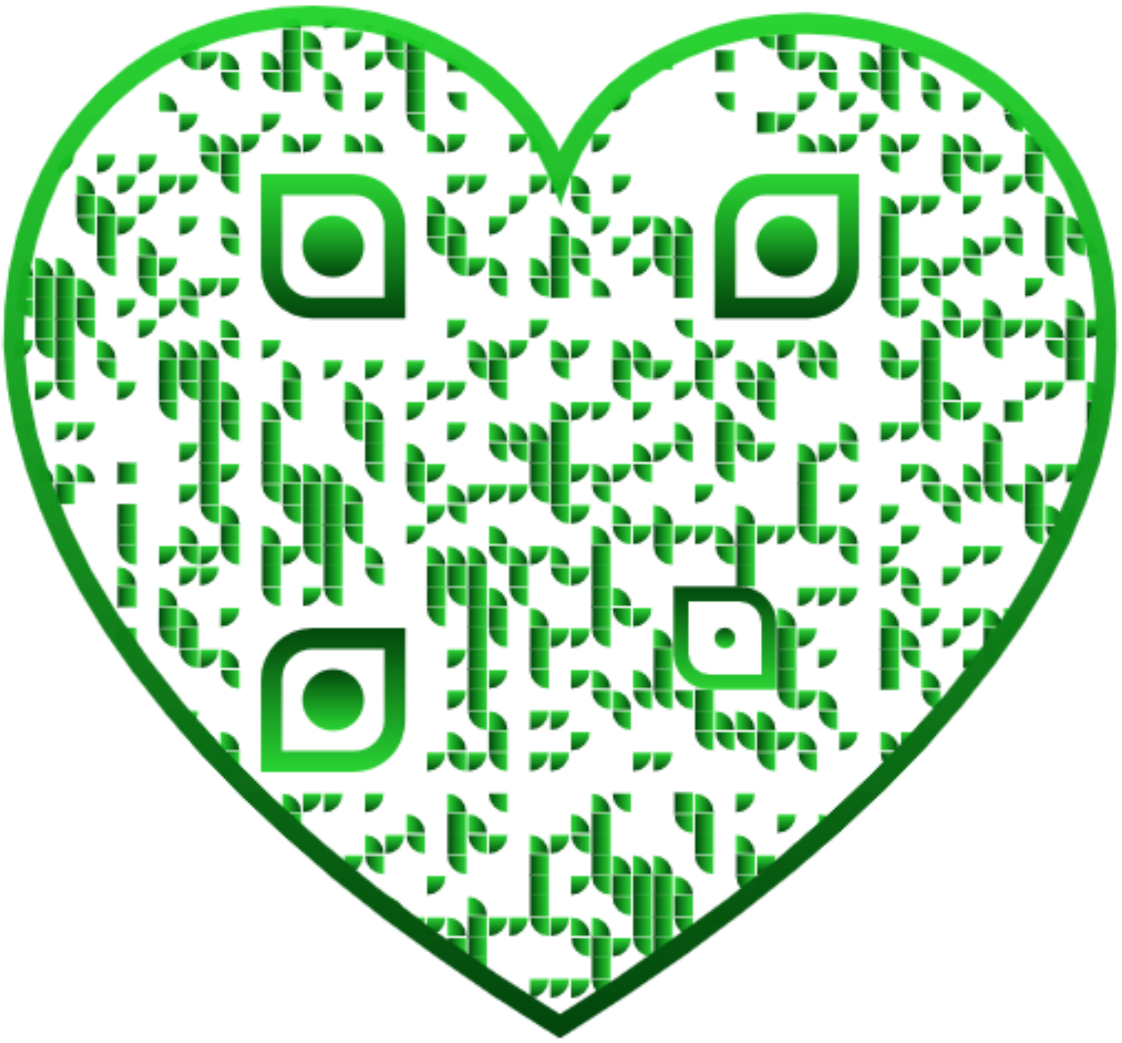
Caught in a Mosh:

The Golden Era of Thrash



Martin Popoff



Caught in a Mosh:
The Golden Era of Thrash

Martin Popoff

Power Chord Press
PO Box 65208
358 Danforth Avenue
Toronto, Ontario, Canada M4K 2Z2

ISBN 978-0-9952533-6-0
Copyright 2017. Martin Popoff

All rights reserved under article two of the Berne Copyright Convention (1971).

No part of this book can be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

First Power Chord Press paperback printing: May 2017.
Printed and bound in Canada.

www.martinpopoff.com

Table Of Contents

Introduction	**5**
1983 – "These guys were nine feet tall or something"	**7**
1984 – "We were the dirty Motörheaders and they were the sissy nancy boys"	**35**
1985 – "I'm maybe jealous of the royalty checks"	**115**
1986 – "There's no way we're going to be on the radio, so why even try?"	**177**
Credits	**233**
About The Author	**234**
Martin Popoff – A Complete Bibliography	**235**

Introduction

Welcome one and all to *Caught in a Mosh: The Golden Age of Thrash*. I'm sure that most of you, faithful readers, are well aware that this is the second of a planned trilogy of thrash books, and a follow-up to *Hit the Lights: The Birth of Thrash*. And of course, the present volume can be read in that spirit, or, in fact, it can be approached as a stand-alone volume that looks at a sort of three-and-a-half-year time span in which thrash bloomed, grew up, produced its most celebrated clutch of masterpieces.

In that light, consider this a book that celebrates and discusses in a fair bit of detail, the likes of *Fistful of Metal* and *Spreading the Disease* from Anthrax, *Ride the Lightning* and *Master of Puppets* from Metallica, *Killing Is My Business* and *Peace Sells* from Megadeth and *Hell Awaits* and *Reign in Blood* from Slayer, the latter of which closes the gate in a splatter of life fluids, on this second volume in our series.

Also something to look forward to here over and above the first volume, many more voices have joined the discussion as we start to see a fecund, productive German thrash movement, along with the best of the second-generation bands such as Death Angel, Testament and Overkill, all of whom visit us regularly, to tell the story of these creative and memorable years, whether they are discussing their own work or that of the suddenly "Big Four."

A couple points of process, which are necessarily a repeat of comments from the first book: in terms of the timeline, when I didn't know when within a year something happened, it's placed at the beginning of that year's section, before January. The same thing goes for what happens inside of a month. If I didn't know what time of the month, it went before the first of the month. And then hopefully I've been consistent enough when it comes to terms like early, mid and late, as well as the seasons of the year.

And again, I'm always wondering—but hoping—about this timeline with quotes format, that people are finding it enjoyable. As with the first book—and really, quite differently from all the other books I've done using this methodology—these are really coming off as much more of an oral history, meaning that the passages of quotation versus the perfunctory entries is much greater in terms of word count. In that light, these books hopefully read like drunken backstage reminiscences, arguments, debates and descriptions about the contours of thrash history, through the words of those who were there. The idea is to underscore how quickly thrash became complicated and classy, how completely it moved on from speed and chaos and mess and rebellion toward an esteemed standing as progressive and demanding of chops.

And if that methodology and that message is something that sounds appealing to you, well, then we're going to get along just fine. And so, without further adieu, let's dive into the mid '80s and an examination of thrash's space and place within a heavy metal world where gold and platinum albums were handed out to hair farmers like candy to a bunch of crybabies.

Martin Popoff
martinp@inforamp.net
www.martinpopoff.com

1983 — "These guys were nine feet tall or something"

Hopefully I've sufficiently welcomed you back to our thrash trilogy in my Introduction, but here, I humbly welcome you back to 1983—the back half of 1983, that is. Because we ended the first book, *Hit the Lights: The Birth of Thrash*, in late July 1983, with the issuance of the world's first thrash album, *Kill 'em All*. The balance of 1983 is fairly quiet, except for an emphatic punctuation mark at the end, with Slayer loosing upon the world their debut album, *Show No Mercy*.

But leading up to that, it is actually Slayer that opens book #2, with their appearance on *Metal Massacre III* with "Aggressive Perfector." Our previously Priest-y heroes are now thrashing capably, while, conversely, also in the summer of 1983, Raven have decided to give up speed metal and just rock hard and heavy and mighty but mid-paced, with their classic third record *All for One*.

Into the Fall of 1983, and Overkill bring us the *Power in Black* demo, Anthrax comes up with a single, Kreator, still called Tormentor, come up with a demo, and over in the Bay Area, we see the formation of Testament. As well, Anthrax are busy on their debut album while Exciter is busy recording their metal-mad *Violence & Force* album. Finally, hard to believe, but the bounders that are the boys of Metallica are already hard at work constructing the imposing material that would comprise their landmark second album, *Ride the Lightning*.

But as alluded to, the second half of 1983 belongs to Slayer, who issue on December 3rd, *Show No Mercy*, on Metal Blade Records. All of a sudden Metallica doesn't look quite so scary and Venom are exposed for, through the contrast, the hot mess of nascent black metal we all knew they were but loved anyway.

July 1983

Late July 1983. *Metal Massacre Volume III* is released, with Slayer's first output, a track called "Aggressive Perfector," which is pretty squarely thrash, pretty much the Slayer we know and fear. Tom Araya says that that was not their kind of music at the time, but they had heard *Metal Massacre* and *Metal Massacre II* and said, we can play faster and heavier than that.

Metal Blade Records founder Brian Slagel:

With Slayer, I'd gone to see one of our bands. Bitch was playing a show in Anaheim. I think it was the Woodstock—there were two places down there, Radio City and Woodstock. So Bitch was playing and they had a bunch of bands opening for them. And I was always looking for bands, so I got there early just to see who the openers were, because this was Orange County and I lived in LA county so I wasn't in Orange County as much. So I got there early and Slayer went on and they were amazing. The funny thing about Slayer, the first time I saw them, they played maybe two originals and the rest were covers. But they did, at that time, the best version of "Phantom of the Opera" by Iron Maiden I'd ever heard. I was blown away. And I was like, wow, these guys are really good.

So I'd gone up afterwards to say hi to the band, and they had a manager guy that was kind of helping them. And I said, "Hey look, I do these compilations; if you guys can deliver me a song…" Because again, I had no money, so the bands had to record it and give it to me because I couldn't pay anything. I said, "If you guys can get a track together, I'd love to put you on one of these compilations." They said that would be cool.

So they went in and we hooked them up with Bill Metoyer, a local engineer guy that did a lot of stuff inexpensively, went in, did a couple tracks. And by the time they got to the Metal Massacre thing, I'd seen them play four or five times, and they were getting a lot better and had a lot more originals. And I said, "Hey, same thing, if we can get enough money together to do a record we should do a record."

Slayer drummer Dave Lombardo:

Brian Slagel handed me his business card and told me that he wanted us to do a song for his compilation. He had opened for a band called Bitch, which was on his label, and he handed me the card and I left it in my pants, and it was all wet, and when I got home that night I looked at the card and went, "Hmm, Metal Blade Records." So I told the guys,

"Hey, somebody wants us to do a song for a compilation." We called him up, and next thing we know we're in a studio, we recorded the songs, and he said, "Hey, we want you to do some more. We want you to do a whole record." We were excited. Very excited.

As for why we took the music this way, it's satisfying, it's gratifying to play that style of music. It's almost like an adrenaline rush. You feel this energy whenever you hear those guitars and the drums being played. That kind of gets you going. So it was pretty easy for us to grasp onto that, go for the songs that were heavier. I gravitated towards those songs. So I think it's innate that you start developing a liking for that music.

Compared to the LA metal at the time, the hair metal, thrash was more of an offshoot of punk. I guess we related to that more than punk itself. I didn't want to shave my head, but I liked having long hair and playing rock music, so the next best thing would be this music called thrash. It was really hard at the time to understand what was going on because we didn't know what was developing. It was just natural. We just wore blue jeans. We saw that Lemmy wore a denim jacket, or the band Saxon, denim and leather, so that kind of set the uniform of thrashers or metalheads.

As opposed to, honestly, hair metal was pretty gay. I mean yeah, Slayer wore makeup, okay, but not to the extent… we just wore black eyeliner, which what we were doing was copying Ozzy at the time because it looked evil. It was a little rebellious, but it wasn't long after that we were convinced we didn't need that. I could not see myself wearing pink at all. It would be a natural thing to do. And there are some artists that write happy music, or certain keys or a combination of keys, they're happy notes. They make you feel good. But I like the minors, the notes that sound menacing, and Jeff feels the same way. I'm sure Kerry understands that philosophy about music, where the heavier stuff, the darker stuff is the stuff we like.

So to try to find a band that touches on those notes that are unusual or give you the creeps and make the hair on your back stand up, give you the goosebumps, that's what I search for in music. So I think it was a natural thing for Slayer to do because that's what we loved.

Slayer guitarist Kerry King:

Brian Slagel was a fan. He was always into seeing what's up and coming in the area. I don't think any of us had any correspondence with him, so he must have heard about us and shows up at one of the Woodstock shows in Orange County. On the spot he wanted us to go do a tune, so we made up "Aggressive Perfector," did that. And in doing

so, I think he offered us a record deal on its completion or something very close after, and we did it. Next two records. And *Haunting the Chapel.* But Brian saw in us a bunch of young kids that had a lot of potential, I think. We were very serious. We played in Tom's garage far too often. Which was good; it made us better. But just… I think he saw no failure, because that's the way we all looked at it.

Thrash photographer and D.R.I. bassist Harald Oimoen on Slayer's early look:

They were definitely still in spandex. And they had the armbands; Kerry King was way into the nails and stuff. But they wore the makeup at Keystone Berkeley the first time they came out there, and everyone grilled them so bad about it, they never wore it again after playing here. Yeah, so it was the next night at Ruthie's Inn, they played, and they didn't wear it again after that. And they were kind of trippy when they first came out.

They didn't like to tour very much. They hated touring. They would come up and do a show in the Bay Area and like Sacramento and they would go home, or maybe go up to the Seattle or Portland area. But they just hated touring. And it was just like a big pain in the ass for them. But they would always come to the Bay Area. And I actually saw them go home on time. They played the Keystone Palo Alto, and Bob Corona, the guy who ran the place, told them to turn down at the soundcheck, and they told him to fuck off and they left. And they drove all the way from LA to Palo Alto, an eight-hour drive or whatever, and they didn't play just because the guy told them to turn down. But the first time I saw them, they had this mystique about them. I saw Kerry King hanging out at Ruthie's and I had them sign the album stuff, and I was almost like afraid to approach them. I thought they were like evil.

August 1983

August 1983. Raven issue their third record, *All for One*, which Jonny Zazula issues for them stateside, on his new label Megaforce. Although arguably a masterpiece and their best album, it is slower and thicker than its two frantic predecessors. It is in effect, their Black Album a generation early. And like Metallica, although on an infinitely smaller scale, it would represent the band's commercial and critical peak. Also like the Black Album, *All for One* marks an impatience and restlessness to move beyond and create something fresh. Metallica was forging a path past thrash. Raven was forging a path past speed metal. Perhaps in this sense, Metallica owe the idea of the Black Album and all of its success, to an idea of Raven's.

Anthrax bassist Frank Bello:

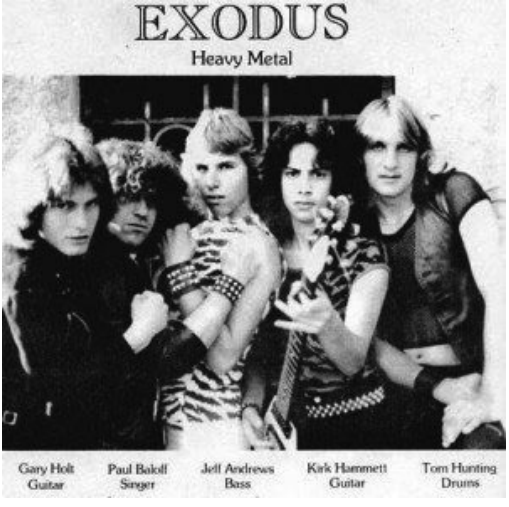
Raven, we've, of course, loved forever. Good friends of ours. Toured with those guys a lot in the early days. I just saw John Gallagher, what was it, last year? He was at one of our shows; he's one of the sweetest guys ever and one of the best underrated bassists ever. That's true, man. I just think they had a lot in the early days of metal, of this whole thrash thing. Hey, look, "Faster than the Speed of Light," for God's sake; that's a great song. People should listen to these bands. Yeah, you know what? (laughs). Go listen to these bands. If you haven't heard them before, I absolutely highly recommended it.

You're touching on some fond memories, which is great. My upbringing, growing up, I remember jamming these songs in my room. And then going on tour with John Gallagher and asking John Gallagher—because he's such a talented bass player—about his eight-string. He played an eight-string bass at one time, that sounded so fucking cool. And I was a big Tom Petersen fan from Cheap Trick; he had a 12-string. So I just wanted to learn more and more, and John was very giving, in talking about bass. Really, really, good guy.

End of August 1983. Metal Church record a fourth demo, with included versions of "Hitman," "Deathwish," and two untitled instrumentals. This one features a new band for Kurdt and is produced now in the band's base in Washington. The band now consists of Kurt Vanderhoof and Craig Wells on guitars, Duke Erickson on bass, Kirk Arrington on drums and David Wayne on vocals.

September 1983

September 2, 1983. Special night at The Keystone in Berkeley, California with speed metal legends Raven visiting, for a show with both Exodus and Metallica.



September 12, 1983. Overkill issue their first demo, *Power in Black*. Opener "Overkill" and track #2 "The Beast Within" are traditional Priest-derived metal in the spirit of Anthrax and Metal Church. Last track on side one of the original

cassette, "There's No Tomorrow," represents a bridge between speed metal and thrash—it's to the speed metal side of the ledger due partly to Blitz's yelpy vocals. Side two of the cassette opens with galloping yet speedy wall of sound "Death Rider." Closer "Raise the Dead" (originally titled "Grave Robbers") is brisk, mid-paced metal, again like debut-era Anthrax or very heavy Priest. Another very early original was "Rotten to the Core," a mid-speed thrasher that showed up on the *Feel the Fire* debut.

Overkill vocalist Bobby "Blitz" Ellsworth on the *Power in Black* demo:

I don't remember the month it came out, but I do remember that the catalyst for thrash was, in my opinion, that it was a secret that those who traded tapes had. Because, you know, the guy in New Jersey who was in contact with the guy in Essen, Germany, grabbing something from some band called Kreator or Destruction coming out of one of those areas, was in touch with the guy in the Carolinas, who said, "I just found this band called COC." Who is in touch with a guy locally, saying, "Oh, did you hear Carnivore?"

I think it was our secret and our network. It was really kind of a clandestine thing. Because we're talking a historical thing with regard to what was public information at the time. You had to lick a stamp to get that stuff to other people. So there was a huge effort with regard to that. And I don't know if it was ever planned. I think it kind of came about by accident that it was in fact the result of the antithesis of what was popular at that time.

But nobody knew what the presentation was going to be. That was formed from day to day. That was formed after *Metal Up Your Ass*, or is formed after *Power in Black* or the Anthrax demo or the first Kreator recordings. But it came out of, let's say, West Coast punk, probably some of the stuff that was going on in Berlin and some of the stuff that was going on in New York City. You took those rules, which were no rules, and applied the energy to it, and sooner or later, it started taking shape with regard to a form.

But when *Power in Black* came out is complicated, because this was something that was a project that we had done over a few studio visits, different places, and, you know, I don't think there was ever like a release of it. How many did we make? There were probably ten at first, and then there were 100, so there was no official system of time, especially.

And these songs, "There's No Tomorrow," "Death Rider," that stuff was starting to weave its way into, let's say, our cover set. I mean, the covers kind of got boring. You were still fans of that music, but I think there's the difference. How do you take that further? Now, you always take your influences, including that punk vibe that, but also the New Wave of British Heavy Metal and Judas Priest, and some really exciting records back then that seemed to be hugely groundbreaking for us.

The punk thing, if you're talking '80, '81, the original punk scene still existed to some extent. Johnny Thunders was still in the Heartbreakers and walking around on 8th Street. Stiv Bators was doing Lords of the New Church. And sure, it was changing, but for me, personally, that was still the focus. So it wasn't the Cro-Mags or Harry Flanagan or John Joseph or the other stuff that followed there. That was a later wave. And I was still excited to see Joey Ramone walking on St. Marks Place down in the city.

But with all these influences, we wanted to be part of not just someone who emulated them, or people who emulated them, but someone who had their own shit to offer. I think that's what comes in and takes the excitement level up a whole notch. When you're doing your own stuff as opposed to just performing someone else's.

Overkill bassist D.D. Verni on the first Overkill originals:

I graduated from high school in '79, and we were doing originals, but we were still a punk band then. Probably right around '81, I would say, we started writing originals. That's when we had "The Beast Within" and "Raise the Dead" and "Overkill." Somewhere in that range; I would say probably '81. But our first thrash song? That we wrote? We didn't even know what we were doing, but looking back on it, what we were just trying to do was write heavier.

At the time we were listening to Maiden and Priest, and we were trying to make that heavier, that vibe heavier. How do you get that heavy? Well, you play faster. That's what meant heavier. We grew up with the Ramones, so we were already playing songs that were pretty fast, at a pretty good clip. But we could play a little bit better than the Ramones could. And so I think that's how it started morphing together. We were playing a ton of Priest stuff and we had played a ton of punk stuff, so when it was time to start writing originals, it got melded together. And probably if you ask any of the thrash bands, we all have the same DNA.

And somewhere, right around there, each one of us discovered Motörhead. Oh my God, are you fucking kidding me? And then everybody was on their way after that. Because that's kind of what you were hearing with Motörhead, the melding of that total punk rock attitude, but with the metal stuff that was in there too. This was a shining example of how it could work.

But those songs, "There's No Tomorrow" was a little bit later. "Raise the Dead" was maybe the first one that we did. That one, I think, originally was called "Grave Robbers" when we first did it. That might've been one of the first ones we had. Because "There's No Tomorrow," we did that when Bobby Gustafson in the band. But we were playing thrash stuff before he was even in the band, and so it was probably "Raise the Dead" or "Beast Within;" one of those two, would be the first one we did.

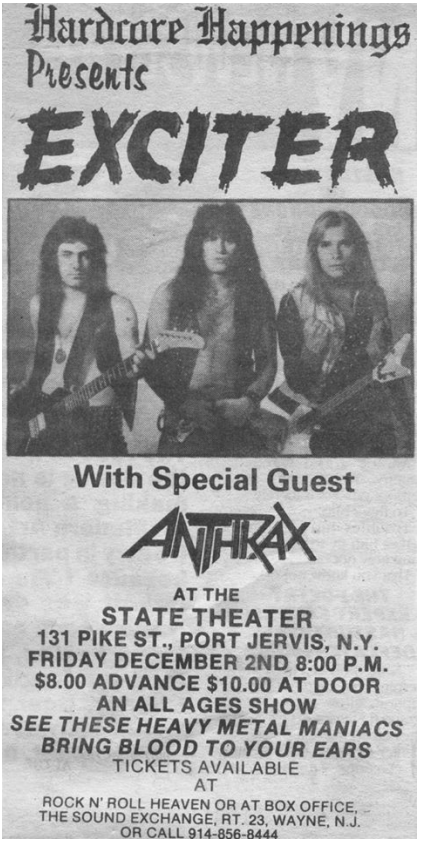
Now whether we were thrash before Anthrax were, I don't know if it was before. What's weird is, we were right over here, we grew up in New Jersey, right across the bridge. Anthrax was right over the bridge in Queens, doing their thing. And I had almost never even really heard of them. The first tour we ever did, we put out *Feel the Fire*, and Anthrax I think had just put out *Spreading the Disease*. We were both on Megaforce, and Jonny Z said, "Do you want to go to Europe and do this tour?" And we were all pumped-up and excited.

He says, "It's gonna be you, Anthrax and Agent Steel." And Anthrax and Agent Steel I had never heard of before in my life. Never

heard of them, never heard any of their songs. Didn't know who the band was. Not only that, but then, Dan Spitz used to be in Overkill, not long ago. Still, never heard of the band. I had Testament demos I'd worn out in my tape deck, and Metallica I'd listened to forever. God, what else had I listened to back then? Celtic Frost, God, so much stuff. Anthrax, right here in our own backyard, I'd never heard them, never heard of them. Never saw them. Nothing. And it wasn't like we were dueling each other in the scene. I never even heard of the guys. Maybe because we were a Jersey band, I don't know.

September 13, 1983. Anthrax play Canada for the first time, opening for Raven and Exciter at The Spectrum in Montreal, Quebec.

Exciter drummer Dan Beehler on being a vocalist/drummer:



It was very hard and I've thought about it over the years when I left, that, "Holy shit, you know, I never see anyone else do it." I know the drummer in Triumph did it. There's a few examples but I don't think anybody ever pushed it to the limit that I did. I would go out and just completely push my body. I have massive lungs and I'd have no air left in my lungs because I'd pull off a scream on one of our old songs, and at the same time I'm doing double bass as hard as I can because I pounded the shit out of my drums as hard as I could. You're playing at 100 mph and there would be no air left. I remember playing live a lot where I would completely black out and I would be falling back and I'd come back just before I fell off the stool. I'd have no oxygen left.

I'd push myself 'til I actually crawled to the dressing room some nights and I couldn't breath and I couldn't talk and I'd be almost vomiting and puking. But it was such an adrenaline rush to go out there. It was all about the metal, it was all about aggression and it was

all about going onstage and "I'm just going to tear my fucking drum kit apart and scream as hard as I can." And I would do that until I blacked out, until I fell off... I've never seen anybody do that. I'm not tooting my own horn, I'm not an amazing drummer, I'm not like Pantera or Scott Travis or... I'm not like that.

And so I couldn't be an awesome drummer and I couldn't be an awesome singer because I had to combine the two. I'm not a great singer anyway, but I just sang because the other two guys sucked (laughs). So we did *Heavy Metal Maniac*, and people liked my voice and we stuck with it. A lot of people don't like the singing drummer thing but I'm telling you, nobody did it to the velocity that I did.

And I still do it, and it's hard at my age now, a hell of a lot harder than then. I've just never seen anybody push themselves as a singing drummer. There's always a break, like with Gil Moore and Triumph, where Rik Emmett sings a few songs. But no one has ever taken the front man thing and pushed it like that. I've never seen it anyways.

But there is a band called Maniac from Brazil and they do an Exciter cover thing. It's so funny. These guys, they put 110% into it. The drummer sings and at times I close my eyes and listen and he's... he's Brazilian and you can hear the Brazilian accent in there but sometimes I think it's me screaming. So, they're doing the Exciter thing and it's pretty cool; it's a cool tribute. I know there are a couple of bands like that around.

September 23, 1983. Megaforce Records produces the test pressing of their forthcoming "Soldiers of Metal" 7" single by new charges Anthrax.

September 23, 1983. Mötley Crüe issue their *Shout at the Devil* album, and a full-blown hair metal revolution is about to take over the Strip.

Metallica drummer Lars Ulrich, on Nikki Sixx, wearing six-inch platform boots, chasing Lars down the street:

There is some truth to that story. I certainly respect Nikki Sixx and he's done a lot of great things, but at that time Mötley Crüe sort of represented everything we were against. The antithesis. And one night we were all in the same space together, short little five-foot-seven Danish guy and slightly tall James Hetfield and then these dudes. They were tall. I mean they were tall dudes to begin with and then their platforms and the whole thing. I mean these guys were nine feet tall or something, just giant cartoon characters, and I don't mean that disrespectfully.

But there was some peppermint schnapps-induced banter, and some obscenities yelled in their direction. I think it was on Santa Monica Boulevard. They were leaving the Troubadour or something, and definitely something happened with some obscenities and I don't think

it quite came to fisticuffs, but I think that I was told to mind my mouth or something. I used to get myself in trouble a lot because when I got drunk, I liked to kind of prod a little bit. Just kind of fuck with people a little bit. There were just some people that needed to be fucked with and it just seemed like the right thing to do. Seven shots of peppermint schnapps into the evening. It was never too obnoxious; it was just smart-assy kind of stuff. Sometimes I would run into people that didn't find it too humorous, and the Mötley Crüe guys definitely put us in our place that night. But we all lived to talk about it, so I guess it's okay.

October 1983

October 1983. Anthrax issue a commercial single, on Megaforce Records, namely "Soldiers of Metal" backed with "Howling Furies." The sessions are produced by Manowar's Ross the Boss.

ANTHRAX
SOLDIERS OF METAL
SIDE A
SOLDIERS OF METAL 3:09
SIDE B
HOWLING FURIES 3:57
PRODUCED BY ROSS THE BOSS
RECORDED AT SONIC STUDIOS, NY
BY AL FALCON & GERRY CORTEZ
MASTERED AT STERLING SOUND NY
BY JACK SKINNER
MegaForce Records is proud to welcome Anthrax to its mighty legions of power. Anthrax have already taken the northeastern U.S. by storm through their fire concert appearances with groups such as Blackfoot, Krokus, Manowar, Metallica, Raven, Exciter and others.
In order to prepare you for their forthcoming album we at MegaForce felt you should feel their power NOW
ANTHRAX – FISTFUL OF METAL – Out in November
Megaforce
Impact

October 24, 1983. Metallica record the *Ride the Lightning* demo, which consists of "Fight Fire with Fire," "Ride the Lightning," Creeping Death" and "When Hell Freezes Over," soon to be re-titled "The Call of Ktulu." It is the band's first demo with Kirk Hammett on guitars. The session was financed by the band's English label, Music for Nations. Also recorded were live in the studio versions of "Seek & Destroy" and "Phantom Lord" to be used as b-sides for the UK-issue "Whiplash" and "Jump in the Fire" singles.

Lars Ulrich, comparing, in 1985, the new material to that of the debut album:

On the first album most of the stuff is either about rock 'n' roll or banging your head against the stage or death and destruction in the sort of, "We're gonna come kill you and your family" type way. Whereas the lyrics on *Ride the Lightning* are a lot more about death

in the "I" form, what different people feel or think at the time of death, during death, after death or whatever. Whether it be from the electric chair, as in "Ride the Lightning," or from suicide, as in "Fade to Black," or from nuclear war, as in "Fight Fire With Fire."

Some of those feelings really are a lot closer to home—for us anyway—than most people would think. And we're not afraid to write about what we feel. We're not so scared that we have to write about heavy metal women instead. I don't think you could start putting lyrics about red roses and flowers and how beautiful everything is into the sort of music that we play. I mean, stuff like, "Today I went out in my garden and picked up a rose and gave it to my girlfriend" might not work that well.

But, you know, what we're doing, we're doing for ourselves. It's an old cliché when people say, "Give the people what they want." To us that's bullshit. 'Cause we're not doing this for anybody else. We write about what we want to write about, and we don't wonder whether some kids are gonna take it seriously or not. And the main thing is that we're not trying to put our statements down anybody else's throats, or telling people, "This is the way you have to feel about electric chairs" or "This is the way you have to feel about nuclear war." We just do it, and people can interpret it the way they want to.

Megaforce Records founder Jonny Zazula, on whether Metallica were having major labels other than Elektra interested in them:

There were some indie labels, but it was ridiculous. They didn't want to give that much money, and those that wanted to give money would come to me and say, "The introduction from 'For Whom the Bell Tolls' has to be cut back from a minute." And I said, "I don't think these guys are going to do that" (laughs). "These guys won't do that."

And then I had the fellow who is A&R for Sony, he didn't get it at all, and basically, we were so excited with the pitch, that we left our one and only Walkman with the tape. I'll never forget that. I left my Walkman... not the Walkman, cassette player. They didn't have Walkman then.

And nobody got it. I played the Anthrax for somebody, who was the head of Arista at the time, and he ducked under his desk. He couldn't take the sheer volume of the beginning of the Anthrax album. It scared him. And I won't give names, but he knows who he is. And he's still in business today. And I always tell the story because it was so funny. Because he was really freaked out when he heard this, and he went, "What the fuck is this?!"

Late 1983. Anthrax record what will become their first album, *Fistful of Metal*.

Anthrax vocalist Neil Turbin:

With the Anthrax record, I was unhappy with that, because I went to upstate New York expecting to… well, we went upstate New York to Rochester, which is about a five- or six-hour trip from where we were. It might've been longer, a real long drive. We were trying to record it at Music America Studios, where Metallica did *Kill 'em All*. We got there and there's no fucking equipment in the studio. The studio had all the shit pulled out of it, and they were going to remodel it. So basically we were walking into a situation that was not going to go our way.

So we got there, we were looking forward to recording where Metallica did, because we liked the way their album sounded. We're excited about it and we got there, we were sleeping on the basement floor for three nights. It was in this old hotel building and the recording studio is in the basement. So this place was haunted and it was weird, it was very cold, and we didn't have much money, and I remember there was a person that we had just met. And the guy invited us to their house for dinner. So the whole band of Anthrax, we're eating dinner at this guy's house (laughs). His wife and kids were there and he's cooking us dinner and that was really cool.

We went back to our hotel—it used to be a hotel, but it's a studio—and we're sleeping on a hard floor, I mean, just like the cold floor. There's no equipment, and we slept there for three nights. Believe me, it was no fun sleeping next to Dan Spitz. And after that it got really old, we needed a shower, we drove on to Elmira, and went to another studio, which was not... I think that's where Carl Canedy came in. Because Jonny Z called Carl, and we were going to record at Music America, and I don't even know if Carl was going to be involved in it at that point.

But then Carl became involved trying to find a studio, and we wound up in Ithaca, which is right near Carl, near Cortland, New York. So we ended up at the studio, and I wasn't really sure. It looked like a nice studio. I look at the product that comes out. It's like, you know, Michael Wagener never produced anything at the studio. I didn't hear any Y&T records come out of here. So at that point it was Amboy Dukes (laughs), for the '70s, and Ronnie Dio and the Prophets, or Elf, that came out of there. And The Rods did some recording there. I was not sold on that studio. Because they didn't have experience doing... like if Def Leppard came out of there, it would've been okay, well, at least you guys recorded some metal, some heavy bands. But they didn't even have that. It was just the Amboy Dukes, dude.

Metallica guitarist Kirk Hammett:
When I met Anthrax, they'd already met the Metallica guys, and I remember watching them play, and they sounded thrashy. I came in at a point where they had already decided to take it into a thrashier direction. They always kind of sounded like that to me.

Late 1983. Brian Slagel and his fledgling label Metal Blade Records issue *Metal Massacre IV*, which features the near-thrash likes of Death Dealer, Zoetrope, Thrust and Abattoir.

Metal Blade Records founder Brian Slagel on the LA metal scene of the day:

Being in LA, you get a lot more rules to break and things to bend and things to do that you can push the boundaries. I think there were two types of bands that came out of the early '80s scene here. There were the types of bands that played the music because they loved the music and were really into it, and those were probably more the heavier thrashier bands, and then there were the bands that wanted to be rock stars.

And I think Mötley and Ratt and those bands fell more into that category, like, "We wanna be rock stars, and however we can be rock stars, that's what we're gonna do." And once they smelled that something was happening, they made a little adjustment in their music and their look and became successful and that got them the attention of women, which also they were looking for. For whatever reason back then, guys that looked more like girls got all the girls. So once they saw that and saw it worked, then they were full steam ahead doing that stuff. And I think Motley and Ratt, specifically, wanted to be more rock stars than music stars, and that was the way to do it.

So to simplify it, the difference that I found between guys doing thrash metal and guys doing glam metal was people doing glam metal wanted to be rock stars. They wanted to do anything they could to be rock stars. They didn't really care too much about the music; music was their ability, their conduit, to get there. Whereas thrash people, it was always about the music and not about the image. It was about the music and the lifestyle that you had, but the music was what drove that. The musicians wanted to get better, wanted to push the envelope.

Look at Slayer or Metallica for example. They were friends—and even Armored Saint, in that realm—they were all friends but they pushed each other musically. Slayer heard a Metallica song, "We've got to write one faster." So you had this friendly competition. Exodus is in there too. "Hey, did you hear that new Exodus song? It's really fast. We gotta do something more fast or more complex. Their song's five-and-a-half minutes, we've got one that's eight." So there's competition based on the music and making better music.

You didn't have that in glam. Unfortunately in that scene it was like look at what those guys are doing on stage and how their hair looked or how their outfits looked and their effects. It wasn't as much about the music as it was in this other scene. It was more about the music. And everybody was so passionate about it too. None of these guys started out as virtuoso musicians. Maybe Hetfield more than anybody else had some musical background that helped him, but these were all just young kids that loved the music and started playing. It was so important, they'd play for hours and hours each day trying to get better to make the music better.

I don't want to discount the glam guys and say those guys are bad and these guys are good. Clearly guys like Mötley wrote some great songs. But the focal point wasn't necessarily all about the music. There were other outside sources that came in. It's people's tastes too. Everybody's taste is a bit different. Those of us that like a bit more complex interesting stuff musically will gravitate towards that. I grew up being a huge Kiss fan. None of those Kiss songs are 20-minute long opuses of phenomenal musicianship. So it depends. I think the big difference between the two is the music was the focal point of the thrash stuff and not of the other ones.

As for the level of partying, it was a scene and a culture and a lifestyle and part of that lifestyle certainly indicated drinking. Because everybody did that. That's what you do after the show. You play the show, then you go back, you drink and have a good time, and everybody got along really well. There wasn't really a drug culture as much. There were some guys that smoked pot and maybe there was a couple other things, but there were different scenes for that. Obviously in the '80s there were a lot of elements that crept into the party aspect of it, but for the most part it was really just about drinking and it became part of the culture. And I'm not sure what came first, the music or the drinking. I guess as you get older and you start to get 20, 21 you start drinking. And certainly that was the thing. We always went out every weekend and saw a bunch of bands and drank. That was part of the whole thing. I don't know how much of an influence that had on the music, but it had a big influence on the camaraderie, because you could get together, have a couple drinks, have a good time, and that was vitally important to that scene.

Everybody looks at the music industry and says they're all wasted, but if you're going to be successful... you can do that to a certain degree but you have to be serious about your craft. Back then, everybody's 20, 21, 22, you recover a lot quicker when you have a great time. But it was still important for them to play their music well. Some guys that overindulged and couldn't do it the next day, they got swept out. But trust me, it was a huge party. Partying was a huge thing. There were so many crazy huge incredible parties that went until three, four, five in the morning, and usually those were Saturday night because nobody had to play or work on Sunday. That was part of the whole community thing. I think the guys who overindulged were the ones who got strewn to the side.

And as I say, all the girls were going to the glam shows. They certainly weren't going to the thrash shows. Lyrically, certainly, that type of music and how aggressive it was and where the music and the lyrics were going was towards males. That's just the way it was; it made sense. The alcohol was definitely in there. They called Metallica Alcoholica, and there wasn't anything inherently in the lyrics that talked about that, but there were some fringes and some things in there that went there. And everybody knew it went hand in hand. If you were in a band, that's what you did back then—you partied. Whether it was a thrash band or a punk band or a glam band or anything else, you'd go out and party.

Late 1983. Kreator, at this point known as Tormentor, issue their first demo, *Blitzkrieg*, consisting of "Armies of Hell," "Cry Hell," "Satan's Day" and "Messenger from Burning Hell." The sound is akin to the thrashy speed metal of Exciter.

Late 1983. Testament forms, as The Legacy, in Berkeley, California.

Testament guitarist Eric Peterson on his early roots:

I grew up in Lafayette, California, in kind of the early, late '60s. Music was probably introduced to me in '68, '69, like five or six years old. My parents were pretty young. I remember I used to always trip on my dad's record collection. He had Santana and Black Sabbath, Led Zeppelin *II*—that used to scare the crap out of me, the middle section of "Whole Lotta Love."

Back then people partied a lot and they used to crank their music. My parents would listen to Janis Joplin really loud or Jimi Hendrix, so that kind of got embedded into my brain. The music I chose, I think my first record was the Jackson 5, the best of, but then later I think Led Zeppelin was one of my favourite bands when I was a kid. I think later, I was really into soul for a while, like Earth Wind & Fire and The Commodores, growing up in high school. I think the first hard rock record I got, in '73, was the Montrose record, and that was like acid rock or something. I was like, "Wow, what is this?"

After that, I was in seventh, eight grade. I just hung out in my town, I didn't really go to clubs or anything, but at that point I was listening to Kiss and Aerosmith and I'd get in fights about who was better, Ted Nugent or… a lot of my friends were Ted Heads, and I was into Aerosmith. I was really dedicated to one band. "Nobody's Fault" by Aerosmith, which was actually a song we covered, that like the beginning of metal, and I don't even think they knew about it. It wasn't until Judas Priest did *Unleashed in the East*, and I went to see them, that that was it for me. When I saw Judas Priest, Rob Halford came out with the machine gun and shot up the audience, and we were just like, "Whoa, that's pretty wicked." That was actually the first concert I went to, was Judas Priest.

Later, I was going to clubs and stuff in high school. I moved to Alameda, went to Alameda High School, and they had Metal Mondays in San Francisco and a lot of my friends' bands would play and they'd open for national acts, and I'd just go hang out with them and see a lot of bands like Y&T, who were a local band that was pretty good. But we were into a lot of the European bands, like Accept, Judas Priest, Scorpions—there weren't really any US bands.

It was a lot of the European bands that, guitar-wise for me, really got me into it. All the American bands like Van Halen, April Wine (sic), it was so corporate and it was all about the hook, where all the European bands, it was the guitar just riffing away. I think what we did was we mixed that with a punk attitude and sped it up a little bit, and then you have thrash.

Testament bassist Greg Christian on his path to thrash:

I grew up in Pleasanton, California, suburbs of here. I guess I was kind of a reclusive kid. I was always into music starting pretty young. I was probably fourth or fifth grade the first time I heard Black Sabbath and I was just blown away. I heard the song "Iron Man" and life was never the same. It was my older sister and her friends, their records that I listened to. Black Sabbath, Aerosmith, Ted Nugent. The first record I got was Kiss *Alive!*. I was into the hard rock and what at that point was metal, like Sabbath. From the beginning I also listened to stuff like Parliament Funkadelic; I was into that a lot and I think that, at times, comes out in my bass playing.

Before that, when I was a kid I wanted to be a scientist. I studied reptiles. I still know tons of useless facts about reptiles and dinosaurs and about animals in general from when I was a kid, but then as soon as I heard that Sabbath record, something just clicked and it just changed.

For me the band thing happened really quickly. A lot of it was just because I played bass. I hooked up with these guys. Where I grew up was 30, 40 miles away from here, I was into stuff like Black Sabbath and Iron Maiden and I was just getting turned onto thrash. But nobody out where I lived played like that. I was like yeah, I want to jam with these guys.

So I went from knowing the more commercial stuff… like Maiden was probably the biggest heavy band at that time, to all of a sudden in a period of a few weeks, I got turned onto this whole slew of what at that point was underground music. This is when I was still in high school too. I got turned onto Metallica, Slayer, Mercyful Fate, Venom, Angel Witch, Exciter, Accept. And within a period of a few weeks I then got hooked up with these guys who were playing this kind of style, and it all happened really fast for me. My last couple months of high school, I went from never venturing over the hills out of our town to being at shows every night and rehearsing out here in Oakland four nights a week. It moved very quickly.

So I was always into heavier stuff, and that was like a new thing. I don't know. It wasn't a big stretch for me, I think, being into stuff like Sabbath and Iron Maiden, Saxon. That was about the most underground I knew before that, to hearing the first Metallica and the

first Slayer. It was just like, "Wow, okay, they kicked it up a notch." But it was still in that same direction, if that makes sense. But my first time driving out to meet Derrick, Eric and Louie and Zet, popped in a practice tape and from the first two notes, I knew I wanted to jam with these guys. I was just like, "Wow, yeah, they're onto something."

With the Europeans, it was the distortion of the guitar and the control they had of it. Led Zeppelin and bands like that, Aerosmith, they all had a really heavy sound, but their guitar… they didn't get it right with the distortion. I mean they got it right for them, but to be heavy metal, it wasn't until Judas Priest or the New Wave of British Heavy Metal where they got it right. It was just that perfect tone.

When we first started off it was more about playing really fast and trying to sound evil. I think what brought us to the next level was getting Alex in the band, because he brought the theory of being melodic and changing keys, not just playing in one key really fast all the time. It's like, "Well maybe try to go to this chord." He was trained by Joe Satriani; he took lessons from him. So I think the combination of Alex's training, and my darkness of all the stuff I listened to… because he listened to jazz and more melodic stuff, and I was listening to the dark stuff—together that's when it really hit. The first song we wrote together was called "Burnt Offerings." And after that followed "Alone in the Dark" and everyone started going, "Hey, we can do something with this."

Testament guitarist Alex Skolnick on his upbringing:

Very strange. I didn't realize how strange it was until years later and I started traveling around the rest of the United States. Because I grew up in Berkeley, which was this epicenter of hippie culture, and kind of like a big hangover from the '60s. So when I was very young it was the '70s, and there were a lot of tie-dye shirts around, people driving cars that were painted funny. Hari Krishna movements on the street, and I was expected to think that was normal. I didn't know this; I thought this was how the whole country is. And then one day I realized that Berkeley is this very different place. And then I started exploring San Francisco and just getting a sense that the San Francisco Bay Area really has its own culture; the whole Haight-Ashbury, Summer of Love, anti-war protests, you could still feel that, at least where I grew up.

The rest of the guys in this band grew up more suburban, so that might have been a little different. But for me it was definitely coloured by this environment, and the music scene was something that a lot of people I knew were getting into. Lots of different styles of music, too. There wasn't a sense that you had to be at war with

other musical movements. If you played heavy metal, it was okay to like ska bands, for example. And in fact I knew people that played in both types of bands. Heavy metal people listened to hip hop, there were rap fans that would come to metal shows, because it was a small circle. It was just the Bay Area music scene and pretty much everybody supported each other. As we got older, it started to get a little more divided, and then if you became part of a scene, you became more stuck in that scene. But I remember a time where pretty much all the scenes seemed to gel, and there was a lot of overlap.

One example I can think of in particular, there's a guitar player, his name is Mike Long, and he was the first one to replace Kirk Hammett in Exodus. And good guitar player, too, but after Exodus he joined a band called The Freaky Executives, which was like a ska funk band, kind of influenced by Morris Day and The Time. And it wasn't that unusual for somebody to play in more than one style of band. And you would see the guys from Exodus at Freaky Executives shows and vice versa, but it was all part of this Berkeley scene. So that part of it was really cool. But I think as I got older and I started to see the rest of the country I realized that there's something very limiting about growing up in the Bay Area because it's so far removed and so unique. I started realizing that maybe the reason why some of us were drawn to heavy metal is it was a revolt against that whole peace/love/hippie culture that we'd grown up around.

But I only knew one guy with my background that got into heavy metal and he grew up right up the street from me, a singer for the group Laaz Rockit, Michael Coons, who Metallica opened for their very first time in the Bay Area. Obviously that changed pretty quick, but we both had fathers who were on the faculty at UC Berkeley, so we both had academic intellectual parents, but we both ended up in bands with people from the suburbs, that had more working class parents. When I joined Testament, the singer was Steve Souza, who would later go on to join Exodus, but his father was a Hells Angel. So it was very different, and you did have that a lot. You had these people from very different backgrounds getting together.

The reason I gravitated towards thrash metal was a little bit of an accident. I had an interesting path getting there. It didn't happen overnight. It's not like I heard it one day and said that's what I want to do. I would guess it started with Ozzy. When I was in the eighth grade, that was when there was the tragic plane crash and the death of Randy Rhoads, and that got a lot of people's attention. I've heard stories about when Jimi Hendrix died, and a lot of people discovered Jimi Hendrix that way. I discovered Randy Rhoads that year. And it was also cool to like Ozzy. It was very weird at Willard Jr. High School because it was cool to like the English Beat and it was cool to

like Ozzy, and it was cool to like Van Halen. But once… like a year went by, and if you listened to Iron Maiden or Judas Priest, you were on the wrong side of the tracks. So the guys listening to that music wore leather jackets and were starting to grow their hair out, and I started falling in with guys like that.

Late 1983. Metallica continue to write material for what is to become *Ride the Lightning*.

THIS NEW YEAR'S EVE THE LEFT BANK STARTS OFF 1984...
WITH A DOUBLE BARRELED BLAST OF HOT HEAVY METAL
WITH
METALLICA
AND SPECIAL GUEST
ANTHRAX
DOORS OPEN 10 P.M. SAT. DEC. 31
$10 ADMISSION INCLUDES FREE CHAMPAGNE AT MIDNITE
PARTY FAVORS FREE MUNCHIES, AND LOTS OF FUN
THE LEFT BANK
LISTEN TO WLIR FOR OUR ADS
THE LEFT BANK 20 E. 1ST ST. MT. VERNON N.Y. (914)699-6618

Sabbat guitarist Andy Sneap on the advances thrash was making past the NWOBHM:

You've just got to listen to the Metallica albums. Listen to "Angel of Death" by Angel Witch and then put on "For Whom the Bell Tolls" and tell me there's a difference. Because there isn't. You can hear where Metallica lifted songs. And we all do it. Even if you don't intentionally do it, there's a bit of a subconscious thing there where whatever you're vibing off, you'll put into your playing, and that's what people were doing. To me, I see the harmonies… you listen to the outro solos on *Master of Puppets*, it's all very Maiden-esque when you listen to it. So really, for me, although they're not recognized as pioneers of the thrash thing, I think you can hand a lot of it to the likes of Priest and Maiden.

As for palm-muting... Anthrax, Metallica, Exodus, they were obviously the first guys doing that thing. It was always there. It wasn't there to quite an extent until these guys sort of exaggerated things. The bars got raised. There was always the down picking riffs in metal. Although Metallica was doing it in the early days, it was really *Ride the Lightning* for me, where that thickness of the guitar tone came through. Palm muting, it's where you're really resting your

hand in the right place on the bridge, you're digging in and you're getting aggression out on the strings. Your tone probably isn't as distorted as a lot of people think it is, when you get kids trying to do it in their bedrooms. A lot of the old school guys—Eric Peterson for instance—doesn't have that much gain from the amps. He's pulling it out of the strings the way he's playing; he's really digging in. And if you listen to it acoustically, you can really hear the strings snap and the right sounds coming from it acoustically. And you can hear it in Hetfield's playing.

It's a bit more of a rhythmic way of playing as well. One thing I noticed… I've done some albums with some more old school guys, the Accept guys for instance, where palm muting isn't even in the vocabulary. Though they're a heavy band, they're from the generation before the thrash scene, so he's playing more of a Blackmore-type vibe. Though it's the same speed of picking in there, it's not as refined. And it was part of the refining of the techniques that gave thrash a certain sound, I think.

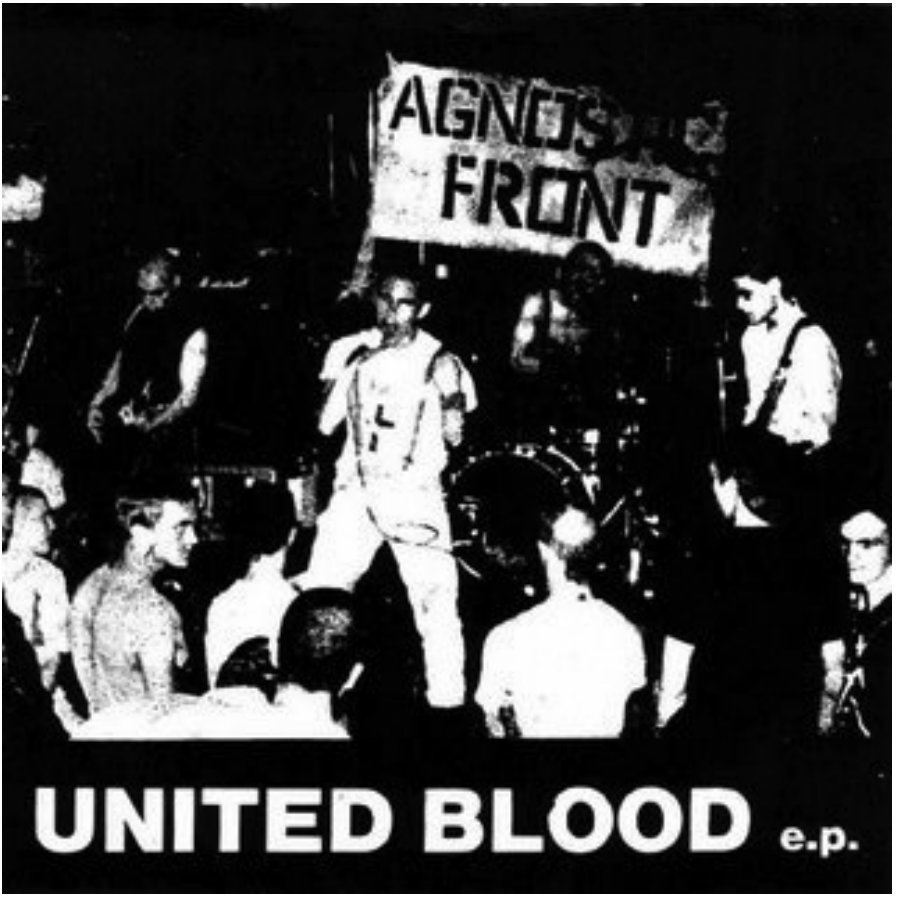
And when it comes to the thrash vocal, that's from Hetfield, really. The early Testament albums, people used to say Chuck was ripping Hetfield off. Although Chuck's got his own identity, I think he started with that Metallica influence and took it in his own direction. You listen to Joey on the Anthrax albums and all he's doing is a Bruce-type thing off the top—he was cleaner. Baloff, god knows where he came from. A skip, I think. But with Anthrax, it always felt like the vocals were a bit separate, but it worked. With Metallica, Hetfield's vocals really did fit in there perfectly, maybe not so much on the first album, though it's a great album. But after *Ride the Lightning* he sort of honed his skills on vocals.

Luckily for them they decided to stick at it and not get a traditional singer because the music is that bit more aggressive. It's just a natural place for a vocal to go with it, really. Bruce's vocals… you listen to Forbidden, for instance, I think that's as close as putting Bruce's vocals into a thrash band as you can get, really. I love it. I think for the mainstream thrash audience, it was just the right combination of tune but aggression in there with Hetfield. In a way with Araya as well. It wasn't overly aggressive, and they fitted the vocals around the music. That's probably the best way to say it. With a lot of thrash, it was guitar riffs that had vocals fit in. With the older metal, it was a bit more song-structured around the melody of the vocal. So from a songwriter's point of view for me, as well, with Martin who was singing for Sabbat, it was definitely that the vocals were more of a rhythmic thing, more of a rapping thing overtop, where the music was created first and then we just shoved all these words in. With thrash, because it was more the guitarist writing the songs, it was probably more guitar-based music than anything else.

Anthrax drummer Charlie Benante on Lars Ulrich:
Oh, Lars was really good back then too. Lars was definitely coming up with some really good drumming parts of those Metallica songs. And that's the one thing that I always said about Lars—I always liked the way he thought. He thought musically, as a drummer. I mean, later on, I know he doesn't put as much stuff as he used to put into the songs, but back in the day, he would throw in a nice drum break, and it was good.

November 1983

November 1983. Hardcore-thrash crossover act Agnostic Front issue their debut 7" EP *United Blood* consisting of ten very short tracks, six songs clocking in at 30 seconds or less.



Anthrax drummer Charlie Benante on the local hardcore scene:

We used to go see bands at CBGBs, such as Agnostic Front, such as the Cro-Mags, and there was this band from New Jersey called Adrenaline Overdose that were so good, and we just never understood why they weren't more popular afterwards. There was Jimmy Gestapo's band, Murphy's Law. They were a really good band, and I remember Jimmy just having this kind of charisma on stage, and just how he was as a front man; they had some killer tunes.

Overkill vocalist Bobby "Blitz" Ellsworth on the relationship between metal and hardcore on the east coast, versus the way it was in the Bay Area:

We were more like this (rolls up his sleeves and holds up his fists). And maybe that's the difference between the east coast and the west coast; it was bare knuckles for a long time. It really wasn't punk as much as it was a hardcore scene that came up at the same time, and I think there was a huge misunderstanding. We were learning back then how to play and how to play well, and the hardcore scene was more of a political noise scene. I think within time both genres, to some degree, there became a gray area where the hardcore guys learned how to play and the metal guys took on their attitude. I think that's where the peace was struck.

But I remember early shows where the hardcore guys would go shoulder to shoulder and wrap arms and wipe out the metal kids in front of the stage. So there was not necessarily that peaceful thing, but I think that's one of the beauties of the east coast. I'm not going to use the word violent, but disagreement leads to a better end down the road. I think that's where bands like Biohazard came from, because they really incorporated much more metal at the time, and bands like ourselves incorporated much more hardcore in themselves as time went on. It wasn't very peaceful at the beginning but it's been a lasting peace since then, based on the fact that there's been that gray area that became very evident as time went on.

November 1983. Slayer work at Track Record Studios in LA on music that will comprise their landmark debut, *Show No Mercy*.

Slayer guitarist Kerry King:

We had the punk vibe, the angry approach to the lyrics, more so than the *Dungeons and Dragons* thing, more than the Ronnie James Dio kind of thing. I don't say that detrimentally because he's one of my favourite singers. But as far as the punk kids go, that was their connection. It was mad, angry music. It was fast like punk, had the anger of punk, but had the musicianship of the metal side, so it just worked out for us, I guess.

Looking back I realize why Metallica left LA. And the funny thing is, in all the history books, Metallica was a Bay Area band, but they came from Norwalk. That's 30 miles from here. But I think they made the right choice because metal was so much bigger in the Bay Area and it worked out great for them. I can't imagine picking up my roots and moving like that. Gotta hand it to them for it, but that ain't my style.

Slayer vocalist and bassist Tom Araya:

I have to give Slagel credit because he definitely put our record out there. We presented him with a tape, or I should say tapes, and he did the rest, you know what I mean? We were very lucky and fortunate to have crossed paths with Brian. We might not have gotten that opportunity. He was a good stepping stone, although an unstable one (laughs), as far as business goes, as far as business aspects go, very unstable. Other than that, I take my hat off to him, because without him, I would not be talking to you right now.

What let me down about Brian... you know, Brian at that time was our manager at the same time. And when we had signed over with Rubin, Rubin wanted to get a hold of our catalog. And we thought we owned it, only to find out that we had signed it away. Thus, trusting our manager, we signed contracts that were shown to us, you know what I mean? You know, his lawyer was our lawyer. And I came to find out that we didn't. We signed over all ownership of our songs over to Brian, not realizing it. But like I said, without Brian, we probably wouldn't be here.

November 1983. Exciter record the material that would comprise their second album, *Violence & Force*, recording with Carl Canedy and Jon Zazula at Pyramid Sound in Ithica, NY.

Metal Child Enterprises, Ltd.
MIDWEST HEAVY METAL PROMOTION
HELL PATROL-MANAGEMENT
MIDWEST HEAVY METAL PROMOTION seeks HARD-CORE HM bands to promote. Interested bands from anywhere send info, demos, live tapes, etc. to the address below.
We are currently promoting two of N. America's HEAVIEST metal bands: TROUBLE (from Chicago, IL), and EXCITER (from Ottawa, Ontario, Canada).
You can write to us for info on merchandise, fan clubs, and press releases for both bands. Please send a large self-addressed, stamped envelope for all info inquiries.
To obtain the LIVE 90 min. cassette of TROUBLE, send us $4.00 (cash or money orders only. Overseas add $3.00. Foreign orders can be made in your currency equivalent to $7.00, if less, round up) payable to METAL CHILD ENTERPRISES, LTD.
If EXCITER's LP "Heavy Metal Maniac" is not available in your record store, please send $8.75 payable to SHRAPNEL RECORDS, Dept. C, P.O. Box 7, Novato, CA. 94948. (Overseas orders please add $4.00).
Be on the lookout for the long awaited HELL PATROL!!! Stay tuned to these pages for further information...
HELL
PATROL
trouble
EXCITER
Metal Child Enterprises, Ltd.
p.o. box 28088
St. Louis, MO 63119-0388

Exciter guitarist John Ricci:

When we were developing this style, we didn't know what we were doing. We were just trying to write good, fast heavy metal music. I was trying to imitate the bands that influenced me in the '70s, like Saxon and Judas Priest and Black Sabbath. I was just trying to get the same energy that these bands had. I just brought it one step further, a little more extreme than what they did. What I came up with was accidental. The

fast, frantic guitar playing, it's just something like frustration. Because we, in this business, you're always hoping to do better and be more popular and be more successful. And sometimes you're not, and that really eats at you inside. Like, why are people not liking our music? It makes you angry. So the whole speed thrash was accidental. It was discovered accidentally.

The first riff I came up with, which was the beginning of the Exciter style, was the song "World War III," which is featured on the *U.S. Metal Vol. II* album, back in 1982. When that song became so popular and so well-reviewed, from that point on I based everything I wrote on that riff. I don't know if those other bands were actually developing that music then around the same time because we really didn't know each other. We're in Canada and Overkill is in New York and Slayer is in California. And the European metal.

And I don't know if it's just a coincidence, but there's our friends Anvil. You know, it's maybe a coincidence that this new music was coming up at the same time. As far as I'm told, our record was out first, and then you started to hear about these other bands. I'm sure they were getting developed at the same time. But maybe to a certain extent ours could have motivated some of these other bands when they heard fuzzy, fuzzy guitar, fast rhythm and screaming vocals. I accept that definition that we were one of the pioneers of speed and thrash. I'll accept it.

Exciter vocalist and drummer Dan Beehler:

HEADBANGERS OF ALL AGES
Rock n Roll Heaven
CELEBRATES THEIR SECOND BIRTHDAY
JOIN US WITH OUR FRIENDS
EXCITER
(Canada's Super Power Metal Trio)
TALAS
(Featuring Legendary Bass Player Billy Sheehan And All New Surprise Line-up)
DJ'S ROCKIN' RAY AND POWER METAL JOE:
The pride Of The Old Bridge Metal Militia
FREE BIRTHDAY CAKE TO ALL WHO DARE TO EAT IT
TAKE THE STAGE TO MAKE THIS A CELEBRATION YOU CAN'T MISS
WITH VERY SPECIAL GUESTS
ANTHRAX
(N.Y.'s Heaviest)
WHERE: SPORTS 9 SKATEWAY RT. 9, MORGANVILLE, N.J.
WHEN: TUES DEC 6 8-11:30
Tickets $8 In Advance. $10 At Door
Tickets Available At: Rock N Roll Heaven, Rt. 18 International Market, E. Brunswick, Crazy Eddie's, Rt. 18, E. Brunswick, Sports 9 Skateway, Rt. 9, Morganville, N.J. 201-536-9477

The second album, *Violence & Force*, was just a continuation of the first album. There might be a couple on *Violence* that were written a bit later but it was all right in the same era. We had the same amps, the same this, the same that. Both albums should have sounded the same. But again, you give someone else control and things change. We should have just went right back in the basement with John Belrose again and did the same thing we did. But you don't know what the hell you're doing at the time, until years later.

The fans ate it up, they loved it and I'm very proud of that album today too, except there are a few screams that were supposed to be deleted in there that are off-key, that weren't deleted, and a few things

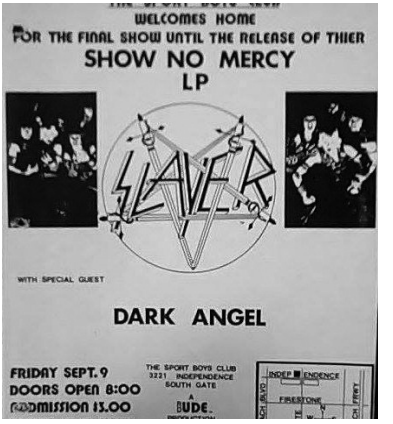
that kind of bug me. But overall it was a heavy, strong album, and the fans ate it up. I just wish it would have had the same guitar sound as the first album. But like I said, the material was all written around the same time, so…

Metallica guitarist Kirk Hammett on Exciter:
We were supposed to play a whole bunch of shows with them, in England, but they got cancelled. I mean, there were a whole to bands like them. There was Exciter, there was Virgin Steele, there was a bunch of them. And, you know, they were kind of peers of ours, and so we were just like, we had the attitude of like, "Who is this band? Are they any good? Let's just hope we fucking blow them off the stage" or whatever. Their sound was much more loose. Much more loose. And, you know, we were all about precision and energy and getting to the point.

December 3, 1983. The mighty Slayer issue their debut album, *Show No Mercy*. The shocking Metal Blade record includes thrashy songs like "Die by the Sword," "Black Magic," "Show No Mercy" and "The Antichrist." Flyers call the band "The heaviest, fastest and loudest band in the United States" and "The heaviest metal band in the United States."

Slayer drummer Dave Lombardo on *Show No Mercy*:

All I know is the recording is pretty primitive. I felt like, man, we could have done better. With the gear back then I think it could have been done a little better, that's all. The songwriting's cool—it was Slayer then. It was us, we were kids. Man, I was only 17 or 18 years old when I recorded that. I think it's great. And actually *Haunting the Chapel*, that was cool. That was kind of like a little tail end to *Show No Mercy*.



Slayer guitarist Jeff Hanneman on *Show No Mercy*:

When I hear that record, I hear a bunch of kids. It brings me back to those days when we were just starting out. We were just kids having fun, and personally, I really didn't think this kind of music was going to catch on at all. So when I listen to that record, I think, God, we were just nuts! It's weird. Because I wasn't really even playing guitar that long. I think I started when I was 17. And Kerry was

playing before that, Tom was playing before that. I don't remember Lombardo. But I remember when we started the band, I had to pick up stuff quick. I don't know, just as a unit, we all worked really tight together. It was a rare thing.

Metallica guitarist Kirk Hammett:

When I first saw Slayer, their first album had already come out. And I liked Slayer. I thought Slayer were more like a Judas Priest meets British heavy metal kind of feel. And I liked the intensity. I had always liked the intensity of their riffs. Man, the very first time I saw Dave Lombardo, I thought to myself, wow, that guy was just... he's relentless. And that was the first thing that popped into my head. Over the years, it wasn't just relentless, it was, you know, what I thought was just relentless playing was actually pure technique.

And over the course of Slayer's career, I've gotten more and more and more respect for them. Because they've always stuck to their guns. They never strayed too far away from their initial vision, no matter who or what was going on around them musically. And, you know, I have to say, Dave Lombardo, he's a dynamo. When Jeff Hanneman passed away, I just thought, man, that's the end of an era. Just like when Cliff Burton passed away, it was the end of an era. Not necessarily the end of the band or the end of the sound, but the end of the package, at the time.

December 24, 1983. Swiss audio terrorists Hellhammer issue their third demo tape, the 12-track Satanic Rites. Although Tom Warrior was 20 by this time, Martin Eric Ain was only 15.

Hellhammer vocalist and guitarist Tom G. "Satanic Slaughter" Warrior:

It is very hard for me to take being cited as influential seriously. I'm not saying that to look cool; I don't mean to be offensive to people. I'm proud of that, I'm flattered, but deep inside of me I can't understand. What the hell? I know the whole Tom story. I never in my wildest dreams would have thought anybody would ever claim me as an influence! Why? I was just Tom who played music. I'm still playing music the way I think it should be done, but that's just for me. It is very strange for me.

When we started Hellhammer, we were hoping to maybe be known in the next big city and we thought that was an unattainable dream. We thought that if we can play the youth center in the neighbouring village, we'd be the big stars. People from our classes in school will know that we're cool. That was our dream. Literally two or three years later, we're in Los Angeles on stage and in London on stage, headlining. It is insane, totally insane. I still have a hard time... Maybe when I have been reborn as a butterfly, maybe I can understand.

1984 — "We were the dirty Motörheaders and they were the sissy nancy boys"

Just as Metallica dominated the thrash news cycle of 1983, so will they in 1984, although their modest victories would take place in a much grander and more impressive year of activity and success for the wider metal world, both traditional bands from the '70s and nascent hair metal bands taking the charts by storm.

Before we get to Metallica though, in some sense, 1984 is a big year for a gassed-up jump *beyond* thrash. The year sees demos from Sodom, Kreator (as Tormentor), Slaughter and Possessed. Hellhammer blazes to life and death with the shock of *Apocalyptic Raids* and then by the end of the year, Tom G. Warrior's second act Celtic Frost issue the *Morbid Tales* EP. Bathory and Voivod both debut, as does Destruction, with the *Sentence of Death* EP. And then there's Venom, who in April issue their third album, *At War with Satan*, detonating dates in Europe with Metallica, who visit for the first time and realize how better of a band they are than the headliner.

Arguably, extremity is also pushed by the high activity by the band that represents the blackened edge of The Big Four, with Slayer pumping out the *Haunting the Chapel* EP as well as *Live Undead* in 1984, additionally visiting San Francisco for the first time.

So yes, add it all up and 1984 is a busy foundational year for black metal, death metal, blackened death or at its most conservative—through the likes of Destruction and Razor (EP this year), as well as Slaughter and even Nasty Savage—nasty, unravelling forms of thrash.

At the far conservative end of the spectrum, 1984 also bestows upon us Anthrax's *Fistful of Metal* debut and the self-titled first volley from Metal Church. Both bands at this point hold that post-Priest position so to speak, helping to define the original definition of power metal from a uniquely American perspective not too far from the likes of Dio, Armored Saint and most of the bands on the *Metal Massacre* samplers. Along these lines as well, Laaz Rockit, Trauma and Pantera deliver records in 1984.

But as alluded to, the thrashing headline of 1984 belongs to Metallica, who deliver their masterful second album, *Ride the Lightning*. Not only does the record point a sophisticated crooked finger forward for the genre before it even gets much footing, but by year end, there's hope from a commercial standpoint, as Metallica sign a multi-record deal with Elektra Records.

Soon Anthrax, Megadeth and Slayer will be on their way, with also-rans Raven even getting a deal, and thrash will enter a period of relative high exposure and celebration. And it all stems from the messy yet quickly smoothed-over handover of Metallica from Jonny and Megaforce to Peter Mensch and Elektra, set in motion one crazy, crazy night at the Roseland Ballroom where thrash fantastically would come of age.

1984. Hawaii issue their *Loud, Wild and Heavy* EP.

1984. Belgian speed metallers Killer bulk up for their third album, *Shock Waves*, issued on Mausoleum Records.

1984. Old Bridge, New Jersey's Blessed Death issue their seven-track *1984 Demo*, followed by a second demo, a two-tracker, the following year.

1984. Belgian speed/thrash act Warhead issue their debut, on Mausoleum, called *Speedway*.

1984. Sodom issue their second demo, *Victims of Death*, which includes the four songs from 1982's *Witching Metal* plus four more similarly speedy, extremely lo-fi tracks, namely "Witchhammer," "Let's Fight in the Darkness of Hell," "Victims of Death" and "Satan's Conjuration."

Sodom vocalist and bassist Tom Angelripper:
Sodom was there all the time. Sodom's always done the same music, and we were always there for the fans. I don't care what other musicians do. I read metal magazines, but I don't care. We're the band and we do the music we like. There are so many different styles of metal—thrash, power metal, true metal. I think thrash is the only true metal. Metal has to get more aggressive and powerful, but melodic. Our songs, you hear one time and you'll never forget. It's really important to write good refrains. That's what we're going to do in the next five or ten years. We don't want to change. The people don't want something new. When we do a new album, we know exactly what the people want. Sodom songs you never forget.

1984. Bay Area glam band Guilt issue a three-track demo. On vocals and second guitar is Chuck Billy, who would soon find fame with Testament as replacement for Steve Souza, who would in turn move on to Exodus. Joe Satriani disciple Danny Gill was also part of the band, as was Chuck's brother Andy Billy, who played bass.

Testament vocalist Chuck Billy on his and the bandmates' upbringings:
My father was a local sports coach who coached basically the whole city, and I had two older brothers and two younger brothers, and I was always thought to be an athlete, either playing football or baseball or something. So that was my goal in life until I got kicked out of high school for drinking, and kind of at that point turned my sights onto music. That's where I went down that path, after high school.

I was about an hour east of San Francisco, suburbia really. It was a safe town where you can leave your doors unlocked, windows open, and walk the streets and kids walk to school. It's totally different now, but that seemed to be like the community we had. Everybody knew everybody and that's the way it was. And to this day, it was such a small community, we're all still friends, all my people I grew up with—we're still close friends today.

But really there was really no music scene for us growing up. We always had to come out to the Bay Area. Berkeley was the start of it all, Berkeley Square and Keystone Berkeley. And so to see music, that's where we had to come. So my childhood was really suburbia, and like I say, grew up playing a lot of sports. I came from a family of all sport athletes, with my older brothers, football players.

So they were all expecting me to be a football player and circumstances had it where I got kicked out of school my senior year, and I always played guitar at the time, so right about that point in my life is when I decided I'm going to play music. Music's my career; that's what I'm choosing to do. So I started off as a guitar player,

on a mission to be in a band and play music. And as it turns out, I was hanging out with my younger brother. Soon as I graduated high school, my younger brother had a band, and I used to go watch him play, and one day they threw me the lyrics and said, "Hey man, why don't you sing the songs today?" So I did and next thing they said, "Okay, I guess you're the singer now." So from that day I kind of threw the guitar down and became a singer. So I kind of, like, was led down the path. And my family, they supported me, but they ultimately wanted me to be an athlete or go to college and do that.

And so we're all athletes, football players, and a lot of my friends were six foot tall, 200-and-something-pound guys, and so we started coming into the music scene. Most musicians are a lot smaller, and we started coming to shows, and they're like wow, who are those big guys coming in here? So we kind of established ourselves as guys from suburbia coming out, and that's when we hooked up and met the Exodus guys and got into that whole scene, the Berkeley scene. And as the scene grew I ended up having an opportunity to get into Testament along the way, which was all tied into the scene there. We're talking late '70s, early '80s here. So the Bay Area at that time was mostly punk rock and glam metal; that was a big thing in the Bay Area in those early '80s. So at that time, thrash and that hadn't arrived yet for us. So all we knew was the glam scene and more of the punk scene here. So, you know, growing up that way, that's all we knew. And then we got hit when Metallica and Exodus and that style of music started coming in. Ruthie's Inn was a place where we got bands from LA, Slayer coming up, Venom coming in. It was like wow. So then this whole scene grew, and then Metallica arrived in it and then it and that's when the Bay Area glam scene kind of died here in the Bay and everybody moved to LA. It's like the metal scene here in the Bay kind of drove that out and put them where it was kind of more welcoming, in LA. And then that's when there was a lot of clubs to play around here—everywhere. Every night of the week you could find something to do, someone to see; it was great.

Now Eric and Louie, who started the band, they had been friends since childhood, and had been jamming since seventh, eighth, ninth grade at home. They probably dropped out around 11th grade and started the band, because they just wanted to play. And that's what they pursued ever since. And Alex, he's kind of a different breed, because Alex's father was a professor at the law department at UC Berkeley, and his mom was a psychologist, writes books, and of course they want their son to be a doctor, a psychologist, something in a different field other than heavy metal music. So he always had this weight on his shoulders of what was expected of him.

So he ended up taking music, which he loved so much, and went to upstate New York, got a degree in music, and now he just plays in all kinds of bands from heavy metal to punk to reggae—he does it all. So he's accomplished what he chose to do in life, which was just music. And Christian, he grew up in Dublin, same thing as me, same school, same kind of story, right out of high school, and we all kind of found each other and formed the band. Working-class families, yeah, and everybody's families are still together, pretty much.

1984. Florida's Nasty Savage issue their *Wage of Mayhem* demo.

Guitarist Ben Meyer on the origins of the band:
Me and Fred and Craig Huffman, we had this girl singing for us; that was Nightmare. I don't even remember what year was, '81, '82, and we were playing cover songs, had a few of our own. And the girl just kind of didn't show up for a gig one time and we said fuck it, and we were looking for a singer, and we were playing gigs with maybe me singing one song, Craig, maybe some just as instrumentals, and Ronnie came out, came to practice. We were trying out different singers, but we weren't sure if we wanted him at that time (laughs). And finally he saw us at another party and said, "Well, y'all want me or not?" And we said, "Come out again" and he came out again and said, "Why don't we name it Nasty Savage?" and history took over.

Vocalist Nasty Ronnie on bandmates Ben Meyer, Curtis Beeson and David Austin:

Ben is really kind of different. Ben really loves the music and the whole aspect of music, heavy metal, whatever project he is in. He has other side-bands and stuff. They'll go out and play for barely nothing just to go play, because they like it. Where I look at it more as a business. The band is very business-oriented and he's very good with the money. We always used to let Ben be the accountant for us because he would always be able to pinch pennies really good on tour. So he was always in charge of accounting and stuff like that.

Curtis is a phenomenal drummer and Curtis has a really big heart, to help others and do good things. He's just an excitable guy. He's fun to be around, because Curtis is really straight edge. So anything he tells you is really true. Sometimes he can fly off the handle and be a real hot head but he really tells you what's on his mind.

As far as a songwriter and musician, David's really got it going on. He's probably always been the more musically inclined, the best ear we have in the band, our best producer. So I really like to talk to him about the mechanics and the aspects of what I'm doing to help me out; I

always count on him to be around in the studio when doing my vocals.

Myself, I just try to be a real person. It's weird, as you get older, you end up, all those friends that you thought you had, they're not really there, they're just acquaintances or adversaries. You've just got to push forward and be a leader, not a follower. That's what I've always been. And I have a vision—you've got to go for it and have a dream. Just make it happen. You know, don't talk it, do it. That's how I've always been. So I just like to make things happen.

I'm a total mellow guy, normal. Like right now, I'm mellowing out. But when I go onstage, it's time to be in theater, time to be a performer, time to put on a show, time to let the music drive your body and turn on the people. I think any performer, anyone who has stood the test of time, can never... like, I could never be Nasty Ronnie 24/7; it wouldn't be right.

I have a lot of journalists, like, when we were touring Europe, they see me onstage, and then after that at the press conference or whatever, I'm really laid-back, normal, low-key, talking very soft-spoken, very polite, just caring about people and intrigued with people. But a lot of the journalists would say, "Man, you're such a madman onstage! Are you on drugs?! What is the deal, man?!" I just tell them, "Look man, if I would go around all day like that, I would never have the energy to turn it all on and utilize it when I have it." And then after I'm done, I shut it back down. There's a time and place for everything.

1984. Cliff Burton's old band, Trauma, issue their debut, *Scratch and Scream*, on Shrapnel.

1984. Sepultura form, in Belo Horizonte, Brazil.

1984. Speed metal/thrash act Slaughter form in Toronto, Canada, issuing the *Meatcleaver* and *Bloody Karnage* demos the same year and *Surrender or Die* in 1985.

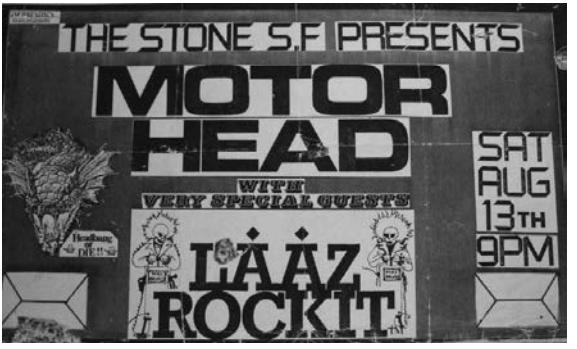
1984. Guitarist Jeff Waters forms Annihilator, in Ottawa, Ontario. Canada's capital has its second notable thrash act, after Exciter.

Annihilator guitarist Jeff Waters:

I started this band in '84 in Ottawa when there were only two other speed metal bands from there, Exciter and Shock. So it was difficult to find musicians who were into the stuff, so I had to settle on what I could get. After my first lineup, which lasted a year, I decided to get more serious. So took two years and did a demo on my own, playing every instrument, and I shipped it around to all the metal labels, and I got three independent contract offers, Roadrunner, Metal Blade, and in Europe, SPV/Steamhammer. Just from the tape! It was then I realized I needed a full, stable lineup, and proper management, because I figured I'd get a better offer if I had those things.

As four my sound, influence-wise, at least on rhythm, it would be James Hetfield and also Malcolm Young. Lead-wise, Randy Rhoads, but there are really too many to list. I have like 30 favourite guitarists! You'll hear riffs of ours that sound like Maiden or Priest or Metallica, but I hope I've done it with a new twist. I did put a lot of the eight, ten-hour days in playing guitar up until about 21 years old, but I'm really lucky that it only takes about a week or so to get back in shape once I've been off for a while. It's tough because when I was young, my whole attitude was to get out and party, get the big record and be a star. But as I'm getting older, I find all that practice boring. Listening-wise, I'm still into that same old metal stuff. I liked the days when you picked up an album and every song was good on the record, not just the one or two that were written for airplay and the big video. *Back in Black* or *Number of the Beast* or a Scorpions album, they were all good. But I'm just an old fart (laughs).

1984. Laaz Rockit issue their debut album, *City's Gonna Burn*, on indie Target Entertainment.



1984. Possessed release their first demo, *Death Metal*.

Thrash photographer and D.R.I. bassist Harald Oimoen:

I ended up breaking my leg at an Anthrax, COC, D.R.I., Possessed and No Mercy gig with Mike Muir, and the barricade ended up collapsing on me. It was in LA at the Olympic Auditorium in like '84, '85, and I ended up getting crushed between a barricade and the stage.

I was down there with Possessed, and I don't want to explain the whole story, but all this crazy shit happened between me and the Possessed guys. I broke my leg. Anybody that had these silly pentagram necklaces that they got at the record store, something bad happened to them. All this evil shit started happening, like we had a flat tire on the way to the hospital, I broke my leg, they didn't get paid, they had their set cut short, Jeff Bercera almost got his nose broken, Mike Perea, his amps went out on him. It was a crazy fucking scene. And that was definitely the biggest crossover metal scene that I've ever seen. There were like five or six mosh pits going on at the same time. It was like a fucking madhouse. That was a big step, that show.

1984. *Metal Massacre V* includes the likes of Voivod, Overkill, Metal Church and Hellhammer.

Metal Blade Records founder Brian Slagel on the *Metal Massacre* series:

The biggest thing about the compilations, and one reason I did them—and luckily it worked, what I wanted to do—was get exposure for these bands. There were so many good bands out and if you didn't

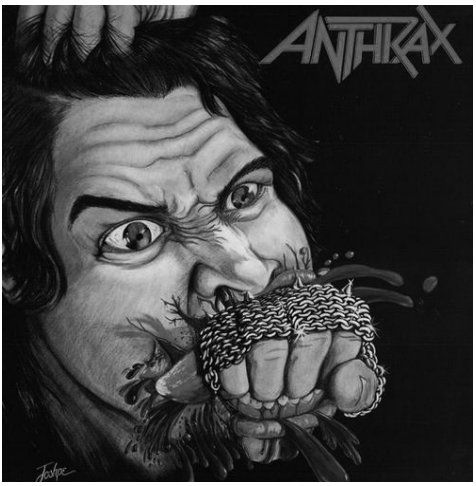
live in LA, you couldn't really see them. The tape trading network was starting to happen and that clearly had a big influence on Metallica as well, and to a lesser degree Slayer when they came after them, but that's still a very finite small number of people. And when you put a record out, all of a sudden there's reviews and people can get it anywhere. You can walk into a store in Des Moines, Iowa and find it.

I found so many people who grew up being Metal Blade fans. For example Richard Christie, the Howard Stern show. And I'm like, "You grew up in Kansas on a farm! Two hours from the city! How did you know this stuff existed?" But there were networks, there were fanzines, and he'd go to a local place and buy the cassettes when they came about. Just amazing to see the reach of these things. I think that's what helped other people hear about these bands. And the compilations were good because you didn't have to buy a full record of a band. You could just buy something and there's ten bands on it and you could just decide which ones you liked. I loved the *Metal For Muthas* stuff and what was happening with the NWOBHM and trying to emulate that here.

Voivod drummer Michel "Away" Langevin on his band's guitarist Denis" Piggy" D'Amour:
"Where we were growing up, the legend was that you could go to Piggy's parent's place, ring the bell, and you could ask Piggy to play anything from any band on his guitar and he would do so. And I would go with a couple of friends to his parents' house, ring the bell, and the entry fee was that you had to have something to smoke (laughs)… So in his room, he would have his turntable with his small stereo system, a small amp and his guitar, and he would play on top of the albums. You could ask him to play Led Zeppelin, anything prog rock, German prog rock, obscure prog rock… But the strange thing was that you could ask Piggy to play Emerson, Lake and Palmer or Van Der Graff Generator and Piggy would play the keyboard parts on guitar. So I immediately realized that he was something different.

January 1984

January 1984. Anthrax's *Fistful of Metal* is released, on Megaforce Records. It is the first and last Anthrax album to feature Neil Turbin on vocals and Dan Lilker on bass.



Anthrax guitarist Dan Spitz on parting ways with Dan Lilker:

Actually Danny was a great bass player, very unique, with his distorted sound and stuff. It's a funny story actually. Neil at that time was the leader of the band—he's a very iron-fisted kinda person. You have to remember, sometimes in bands what you see in the press, someone's face all the time, that's not the leader of the band sometimes. Everybody is designated a job to do. Somebody's maybe good at press or somebody's maybe good at the business.

Danny Lilker didn't shower a lot, and he smelled. For an American, this is no good. So one day Neil Turbin knocked on his door and said, "You're not in the band anymore because you were told so many times to shower and we can't take it anymore." So that's the funny story, basically. And then Neil called Scott and me up and said, "Danny's not coming anymore." And we were like, "What are you talking about?" He said, "I gave him three chances and that's it. I knocked on his door and told him you're fired."

Crazy teenagers, you know? What did we know? All we knew was that guitars were going to rule the Earth, we were taking over the Earth, that's it—us and Metallica. That was all we talked about. We didn't even want bass on the album. If you listen to *Fistful of Metal* or *Kill 'em All*, there's no bass, there's no bass guitar. We'd put it up just so you could hear it and then turned it down a teeny bit and left it right there. It was about guitars, because our guitars were the first guitars to have that bass frequency.

Still, the production on the first album is horrible, but you can feel the aggression and the anger. Then Neil was out, Joey was in, and we had to show everybody as fast as we could that this boy could sing, we're Anthrax and we take no shit, even back then. Neil, at that time, he wrote the lyrics and he was adamant about it: "Don't even come near me—I'll kill you." This is his words: "If you come near me, I'll kill you. You're not touching one word."

He's a big guy; this is how he tried to rule—endless stories, and maybe you've heard some of them—but we literally had books of what we would call Neil-isms that we would write on tour like a diary. Because it's the funniest thing you've ever seen in your life; it's not normal, the things that this guy did. But music, he didn't write any music.

But his lyrics were not my cup of tea, not at that time. I pay more attention to the music, the melody line, and then once Scott had to start writing lyrics, he read a lot of books. Stephen King—that's all he read day and night. It was like, "All right, you start writing." And he would write, but it would be a book. Every song was 40 pages long, and then we would all get together and go no, yes, and make it small. That's why Anthrax always had a lot of words. He was trying to tell like a whole really long story.

Anthrax bassist Dan Lilker:
Fistful of Metal is a good record. Actually we just played in Bristol, England and they were playing that over the fucking PA and I was like, "Hmm, God, listen to this." Yeah, I'm proud of that record—after all I wrote most of it. But I think after that, when they got me out and Neil out, they tried to pursue a more melodic direction, with Joey's vocals. But, it's a good record, I was proud of it at the time, still proud of it. But it's over.

Anthrax bassist Frank Bello:
I came into the band, I got in the band the day *Fistful of Metal* was released. On literally the day it was released, because then we were right on tour, we made five dollars a day (laughs). Literally, for food. We were on tour, dude, and we had five dollars a day for breakfast, lunch and dinner, which, it was a good time.

January 4, 1984. Judas Priest issue *Defenders of the Faith*. The album is arguably the band's heaviest since *Hell Bent for Leather*, pointing to some obstinate pride in the power of metal, and maybe even the realization that there were kids toiling away at intensifying the genre Priest had such an important hand in forging.

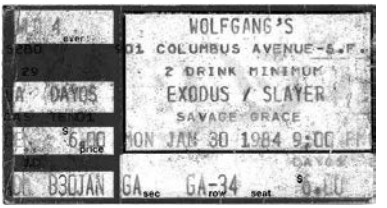
January 12, 1984. Toronto thrashers Sacrifice play their debut show, at Larry's Hideaway in Toronto, opening for Herrenvolk.

Rob Urbinati on Sacrifice live:
Live, we had the most intense audiences I've ever seen for anyone. We really liked the stage-diving, except if somebody jumps up and kicks my mic stand into my teeth, then I'm gonna kick him right back.

Sacrifice guitarist Joe Rico on stage-diving:
I get right into it when it goes on, because I used to be into doing it too. I think though that it'll fade away to a degree, because people want to hear the songs more now.

January 19, 1984. Metallica's equipment is stolen, in Boston, Massachusetts, inspiring the song, "Fade to Black."

January 27, 1984. Slayer play their first show in San Francisco, at The Keystone opening for Laaz Rockit, following up with two nights supporting Exodus.



Exodus guitarist Gary Holt:

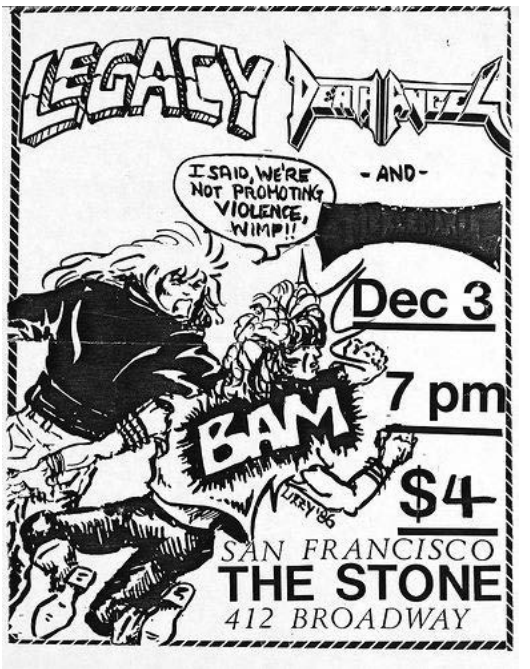
People in the Bay Area, first time we played with Slayer… you look on the back of *Show No Mercy* and they had eyeliner. That shit had to go just to play a show with Exodus, because our fans were not going to stand for it. We loved Slayer, but we're like, you can't wear makeup at an Exodus show. And I think they realized it. And now they're the heaviest band on earth. They always were, but it's just how rabid things were back then. People were insane. The first time we met Slayer they gave us permission to destroy their hotel room, and I think everybody was taken aback by the level of enthusiasm we did it with. It was really nuts.

The Bay Area was the flashpoint of the whole "posers must die" movement, if you want to call it a movement. Kill a poser, drag him out on the street, and Baloff led the rallying cry. Any form of makeup back then was viewed as makeup, and Slayer weren't posers by any

stretch or means—that's one of my favourite albums of all time—but our fans weren't very understanding. The first time we ever played with Anthrax, they were on tour with Raven and we were asked just for a one-off show to play the San Francisco show, and our audience wasn't very kind to Anthrax, because they felt it was some disrespect that we were playing under them, and it wasn't disrespect on anybody's part. Someone asked us if we wanted to play the show and we said sure, we love Anthrax. Love Raven. Yeah we'll do the show, even though that was when Raven started wearing the little George Jetson costumes and stuff, with the little Jetsons flap, little pointy shoulder pieces, crap like that.

We did it, but our crowd was fiercely loyal back then. There weren't a lot of bands that could play with us. That's where Death Angel and Testament—when they were Legacy—and Vio-lence fit right in because they were part of the circle already. They started these bands and were really good and could hold their own. And we all viewed the hair bands as our nemesis. And there were a lot of hair bands in the Bay Area too, so there was always this walk by each other on the street and give each other dirty looks. We were the dirty Motörheaders and they were the sissy nancy boys.

But secretly we went to their shows all the time because that's where all the chicks were. If you wanted to get laid, you went to a hair band show, not an Exodus show. The funny thing is I spent my whole youth hating on Dokken and Ratt but secretly coveting every George Lynch and Warren DeMartini lick, because they're two of the greatest guitar players who ever lived, and still two of my heroes. Just couldn't really admit it then.



But Exodus... it was like a gang. We had a very, very small select group that we called the Slay Team, and it was like Rick's brother, Toby Rage, Andy Anderson and a couple others, and they were our on stage security, the crowd destroyers. One minute they're chucking

people off stage, and the next minute Toby's walking across the tops of people's heads, and I've seen him like 25 feet out, just stepping on people's heads. Guy's like 6' 5", doesn't feel too good, but it was kind of like a gang. Especially in the whole Ruthie's era.

February 1984

February 1984. Exciter issue their *Violence & Force* album. Although it's widely considered their "classic," the sound is already somewhat dated and amateurish for 1984, and the band would never surpass it in terms of impact or influence.

Exciter guitarist John Ricci on Jonny Zazula and Megaforce:

He treated us pretty good. As good as can be expected. He really pushed. He wanted us to play live more, because with Shrapnel we didn't do any shows, because he wouldn't give us any tour support. But Megaforce really sort of enticed us to sign with them after *Heavy Metal Maniac*, because Jonny Z, who ran the label, there was this big buzz on Exciter. So he wanted to capitalize on that situation. He had Anthrax and he had all these up and coming metal bands, so he wanted us, too, on his label.

He called us and he called us for months and months and months and months. I had second thoughts about him. I had this gut feeling about him. But eventually, the guys in the band, we talked it over and we said okay, let's sign with him, see what happens. So we signed with him. He brought us to record *Violence & Force* down to New York State, at a studio that he worked with a lot, Pyramid Sound in Ithaca, New York.

He hired this musician, Carl Canedy, from The Rods. He's the drummer. He produced *Violence & Force*. And we worked with Carl and got along really well. And then Jon Z arranged two or three dates with Anthrax. We did Port Jervis, New York. We played an auditorium. We played a gig in New Jersey. We knew that he was

really trying to push us to play live. Again, we did the shows, but no money, really. We just did it for the exposure.

Then after that, Music for Nations got involved with some of the Megaforce acts that they wanted. I'm not really sure about this, but I think Jon Z traded us with Music for Nations. They traded bands or something. It was like a trade in hockey or something. You take this team, I'll take that team. Next thing you know, we're signed with Music for Nations in London, England through some sort of deal that he did, which we weren't consulted or anything.

Exciter drummer Dan Beehler on *Violence & Force*:

You can't really compare it to today because today is today and you've got to understand that that was '83 and '84 and the budgets we were working with… you know, the guitar isn't loud enough. We always wanted to try to sound like *Heavy Metal Maniac*, but you're working with this producer or that producer and the problem was we gave up way too much control. As soon as you give up control it becomes somebody else's dream.

Violence & Force should have sounded like *Heavy Metal Maniac* because we wrote both albums back to back. But it didn't, because it was Carl Canedy's view of what we should be. Which was great to a certain extent—awesome drum sound—but I would rather see the drum sound lack a little bit and grab John's guitar sound from the first album. It's hard to compare it to. We've come so far in metal. It's been a long time. These are old albums. I mean God damn it, we weren't Metallica; there's not a million dollars sitting here. These were albums that sold a few thousand and we toured around and there was a few old fans out there that might really appreciate it. To me it's well worth it just for those people.

But as for the songs, the second album was just a continuation of the first album because we sat stagnant for a couple of years just writing the stuff. It was all written around the same time. There might be a couple on *Violence* that were written a bit later but it was all right in the same era. We had the same amps, the same this, the same... both albums should have sounded the same.

But again, you give someone else control and things change. We should have just went right back in the basement and did the same thing we did. But you don't know what the hell you're doing at the time, until years later. The fans ate it up, they loved it and I'm very proud of that album today too, except there are a few screams that were supposed to be deleted in there that are off key, that weren't deleted, and a few things that kind of bug me. But overall it was a heavy, strong album. I just wish it would have had the same guitar sound as the first album.

February 1984. Metallica visit Europe for the first time, supporting Venom. The band's new European label, Music for Nations, issue the *Jump in the Fire* EP.

ALL RIGHTS OF THE PRODUCER AND OF THE OWNER OF THE WORK REPRODUCED RESERVED. UNAUTHORISED COPYING, HIRING, LENDING, RENTAL, PUBLIC PERFORMANCE AND BROADCASTING OF THIS RECORD PROHIBITED
VERTIGO
METALLICA
UK METAL 312
INT 872 973-1 1
45 RPM
SIDE 1
STEREO
JUMP IN THE FIRE
(Hetfield/Ulrich/Mustaine)
Produced by Paul Curcio
Taken from the album "Kill 'Em All"
PolyGram Music Publishing Ltd
Original sound recording made by Metallica
℗ 1983 Metallica

Venom drummer Abaddon:
I've looked at a million bands like Slayer and Metallica, and they kind of have this thing about them, where it's almost like a commodity. Venom's never been like that. Venom's always been kind of ... if we did something shit, you can turn around and say it. It wouldn't matter. If you went to Lars Ulrich and said that the production on the last album was shite, he'd be massively offended. I think that's the difference with Venom. We kind of come across untouchable, but we can be touched. We're not made of glass. People can say what they feel, more or less, around the band and expect one reaction or another.

February 5, 1984. Venom's Vienna, Austria date on the Seven Dates of Hell tour is cancelled on account of the band's Satanic image.

Venom drummer Abaddon:

The first European tour we did was called the Seven Dates of Hell. It was like a day in each of the sort of European capitals, and one of them was to be in Austria. And again, we got stopped at the border and it seemed as if they were waiting for us because they made it really difficult to come in. The usual sort of body cavity searches and this kind of thing, but they really kept us there a long, long time considering they didn't find anything.

And in the end, some police turned up and the border guys had called the police so we had to wait for them, and apparently they didn't speak any English. But they were kind of pulling out… we had

like bullet belts and World War II daggers, like knives, this kind of thing, and they were all original real stuff because it was easier. Like heavy metal became about kind of props in America. So you'd go to a sex shop and you'd get this gear that Anvil used to wear, and it was specifically made as a sex kind of a toy thing. Judas Priest as well kind of took that on board. We were wearing used bullet belts, like proper bullet belts and proper daggers. And they started saying something about us being Nazis and about us having this mixed-up SS thing and the Satanic thing and just labeled us and just you know what? Just fuck off. Just go away.

But that was cancelled, and Buffalo it was a very similar thing. I don't know why that started up. I remember being at the venue. I think it was the Eagle Ballroom. It was a big train station, and we pulled up and sound check, noise kind of thing. Again there were arguments, and I remember having to sort of escape in the back of a T-shirt truck, bundled in with all the T-shirts and merchandise and away back to the hotel again.

And I was sitting in the bar and it was funny because the Ramones were playing and Joey Ramone was in the bar. We were just sitting chatting and the TV was on in the corner, and there was a news item on. And he said, "I think this is you guys. Turn it up, turn it up."

And the whole building, the kids had like attacked the building and set fire to the building and smashed windows and everything. So I'm like, fuck, what have we done? We did it again, but we don't know why. That kind of thing often followed us around. Because the band was so over-the-top, I think everybody was expecting crazy, crazy goings-on and a really wild time and all this kind of thing. Certainly in those days when you get a heavy metal crowd together acting like that, it can be pretty volatile. And on a couple of occasions it proved to be true.

February 11, 1984. The third annual Aardschok Festival features a lineup consisting of Metallica, Horizon, Tokyo Blade, Savage, Mercyful Fate and Venom, the latter three being Metallica favourites.

February 17 – April 18, 1984. Megadeth play a number of San Francisco-area shows with Slayer's Kerry King on second guitar.

February 20 – March 14, 1984. Metallica work at Sweet Silence Studios in Copenhagen, Denmark on songs that will comprise their masterful second album, *Ride the Lightning*. Some of the material for the record had been written at The Fun House, the farmhouse rented by the Old Bridge Militia's Metal Joe, during stays between east Coast US shows.

Early 1984. D.R.I. issue a four-track EP called *Violent Pacification*.

Early 1984. Mark Osegueda, a second cousin to the original four members of the band (all are of Filipino descent), and serving as roadie for the band, joins Death Angel as their lead vocalist.

Death Angel vocalist Mark Osegueda:

I actually grew up two different places. I was born in San Francisco and until I was eight years old I lived in a little beach town called Pacifica. It was a great place to grow up; we were right by the beach, kids were riding their BMX bikes and that's kind of what we were doing down there. My dad was a diver and we'd go up and down the west coast and he'd just go diving all the time and I'd go with my family and bring my dog and skateboard and that's it.

Probably about the time I was eight, third grade, my father and mother decided to move out to a growing community more in the East Bay called Concord. Concord, California, where actually Rob's family had relocated there. So my parents ended up buying a place probably about four blocks away from where Rob's family did. That's kind of where it all began, I guess you'd say.

Pacifica was a lot more ethnically diverse, and when I moved to Concord it was kind of a shock to the system at first, and I didn't really know anyone but Rob, and it just kind of threw me off because I didn't really have any friends there. It was just really up-and-coming because prior to that it was a small suburb that grew out of a farming community, basically. Orchards and whatnot. But it grew fast.

The one thing going for it at the time was… where we had moved to, it was all new homes and all new families, so everyone was really getting to know the area. It affected me in that way that I just felt outcast from the get-go. That's probably really when I started getting into my own taste in music rather than what my parents were listening to. Which wasn't bad—my parents were listening to great music like Fleetwood Mac and just old rock.

My first taste of rock was Kiss, basically, through who I hung out with, which was Rob and Dennis—we were all cousins. So we got into the same music pretty much at the same time, and it was Kiss, which then evolved into AC/DC to Sabbath and just heavier stuff—the natural evolution of what you're listening to is you want to get heavier. And then eventually you go back to listen to what influenced them. So that's kind of where it began. Metal grabbed a hold of me at a very young age. Well heavier rock and then metal, too, because when I first heard Iron Maiden and Priest I was hooked, and I just kept looking for heavier forms of music.

And I always sang along with music, but I was still, at the time, not playing it. Just sang, and I was more into soccer, football if you will, and I played that and that's what I wanted to do. When I grew

up I wanted to be a professional soccer player. But I still sang along with records the whole time.

I started going to shows when Death Angel formed; they formed in 1982 and everyone in the original band… so it was Rob, Dennis, Andy and Gus, and they played for two years prior to me joining. But when they started playing is probably when I started going to club shows. Prior to that I think my first concert was Kiss, '79, ten years old at the Cow Palace, and I went with Rob, Andy, Den and Rob's mom, and Dennis' mom brought us. I was ten, Andy was seven, Rob was ten. So that was my first concert.

After that I started going to bigger concerts. I saw Ozzy with Rhoads, Scorpions, Iron Maiden, Girlschool, Iron Maiden, Saxon, Fastway, great shows but never really club shows. Until Death Angel started playing; then I went to see a club show and went wow, this is really cool. And I saw them play with W.A.S.P. and just a bunch of bands that would come up from LA or local bands.

So we started getting more into the local scene and bands coming up. Then I remember we all went to see this band Metallica play at the Keystone Berkeley, which was a great club in Berkeley, but it was still just a little 300, 400 seat club. And I remember that it was Metallica and Armored Saint, and we walked in, and I just never saw energy like that in my life. The crowd even tripped me out; it scared me. It was the first time I saw a huge pit. I'd seen footage of punk shows where it wasn't as violent, and people flying off the stage and whatnot, didn't know what to make of it. Maybe halfway through the set you jump in the pit, too, you get sucked into it, and it was such an amazing release, let alone the energy coming off the stage was just phenomenal.

And kind of then already… when I was a little kid and saw Kiss, I knew that's what I wanted to do but didn't think it was a reality, you know? And when I saw Rob and the guys playing I thought it's not a far-fetched reality whatsoever. I kind of assumed that they already had their thing going so I was going to form a band with some friends eventually, and I was always singing. Started taking voice lessons, and I would help them out at gigs unloading equipment and eventually started announcing them before they'd go on stage. I'd do this kind of build-up and then scream at the end after I said Death Angel, maybe some long scream thing and then they'd hit the stage.

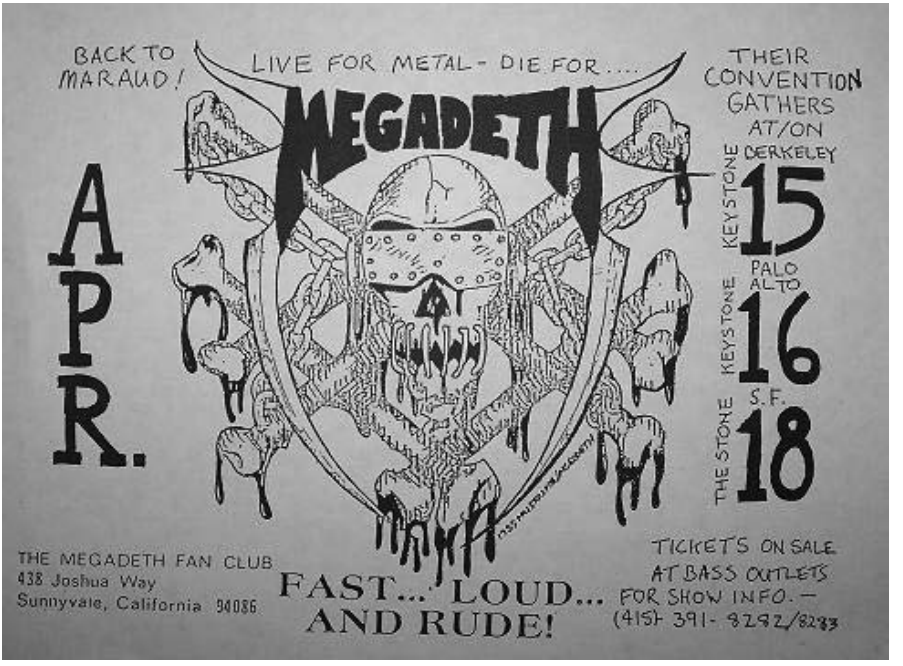
And eventually, as I said, they'd been playing the club circuit for two years already and around '84 me and Rob were going to the same high school together, and Rob said, "I wrote this new song and I want some vocals on it where someone can scream," and it was a song called "Kill as One." "Why don't you come down to Andy's garage?" where they rehearsed and where Death Angel rehearsed coincidentally, ironically until '88. We had two albums out and we

were still rehearsing in Andy's garage! So we went down, we worked on "Kill as One," and I could scream those parts. And it started with "Kill as One" and then eventually "Final Death." They would play and I'd come out for a song, and then another song, and eventually it just expanded.

March 1984

March 8, 1984. Switzerland's Hellhammer issue their *Apocalyptic Raids* EP, on Noise Records. Although more important to the black metal story, it's nonetheless a landmark in noisy extremity, something thrash bands traded in. The EP would be reissued in 1990 with the two tracks from the *Death Metal* compilation added.

March 9, 1984. Megadeth issue the three-song *Last Rites* demo, consisting of "Last Rites/Loved to Death," "Skull Beneath the Skin" and "Mechanix." Dave Ellefson is in the band by this point. Dave Mustaine handles all vocals along with his guitar duties.



Megadeth vocalist and guitarist Dave Mustaine:

I had a terrible time singing and I still don't like it. I don't think I'm very good at it, though people differ. A lot of people will say I have an original style. Yeah, I have an original style because I don't know how to sing. I guess what I tried to do in the beginning was tell a story with a melody.

We had a guy that... we were pretty set on this guy. We were almost going to hire him; of course Megadeth would have been a five-piece. It didn't hurt Journey, except for the fact that the guy in Journey sang like a chick, and this guy looked like the dude from Journey, especially the singing like a chick part, because he showed up with eyeliner on. I was like, "Oh no."

He had two 12-packs of beer, and me and Dave Ellefson were living in his van at the time, so a guy who walked up with a couple 12-packs of beer, that's a party waiting to happen. So I said, "Just wait until we're done drinking the beer; I'll handle this." So I said, "Yeah, that's the last... okay, you're fired." And he wasn't very gracious, but who the hell's going to wear eyeliner to a Megadeth concert unless you're a girl?

So because we had such a hard time trying to find a vocalist, Dave Ellefson said, "Why don't you sing?" Dave and I had been friends forever. Back then we barely knew each other. We'd only known each other a short period of time, and he didn't really know me very well so he didn't realize how scared shitless I was of singing.

I'd talk between songs when I was in Metallica because James wouldn't talk. I didn't talk between songs because I aspired to be a front man. I looked over at him and he wasn't doing anything, and he was like, "Say something" and I was going to go up to my mic and say, "Say something, James" and then I looked at him and I saw some girls in the audience. And I started going, "Hey," you know the Mr. Microphone commercial, "We'll be back to pick you up later."

But I guess for me, knowing that I had become a front man was when I started really watching people sing the lyrics I had written. You write something and you put pen to paper, the farthest thing from your mind is that one day people are going to be singing it, let alone in stadiums singing my songs.

March 22, 1984. One of Death Angel's first shows with Mark in the band finds them opening for Megadeth at one of their early shows, at Ruthie's Inn.

March 27, 1984. Scorpions issue their watery and weak *Love at First Sting* album. Much to any self-respecting angry metalhead's chagrin, the album is a big hit. Although the true Scorpions fan can celebrate the band's laborious rise to the top from roots all the way back to the mid-'60s, the album's

juvenile and poppy songs set in high relief the relative balls-out heaviness of this new metal called thrash.

March 27, 1984. Thrashers have their second hair metal band to heap scorn upon with Ratt following up on Mötley Crüe's success. *Out of the Cellar* would reach triple platinum, with the follow-up, *Invasion of Your Privacy* reaching double platinum.

Rampage Radio's Ron Quintana on thrash's call to "kill the posers:"

Well, that was immediate. That was just Baloff going nuts. And they were such an easy target. At the same time there was punk and thrash, there was always teased hair Van Halen-following bands, like Hans Naughty, who were typical of the bands who would go to LA to get signed, and then of course never made it anywhere. They were the ones we always hated. And it was always good-natured. You know, at thrash shows you would still see a ton of Poison shirts (laughs) and other stupid stuff. And vice versa. You would see Slayer shirts at a poser show. And so it was pretty good-natured. It wasn't much of a war here. LA was always a little more hardcore. As for the girls, girls like really bad music. They like really poser guys, and some metalheads had to deal with that, and we had to pretend we liked some of that stuff (laughs). We'd put up with anything! To a certain extent. So there wasn't that bad a war as far as I could tell.

Testament guitarist Eric Peterson on glam rockers:

They were like the jocks in the metal world. They were the popular kids who wouldn't look at you when you're walking down the hall. They're the beautiful people and we were like the punks. I remember when we finally got our own rehearsal room, all the bands were these great looking guys with great looking girls and really long hair, and here we were in our room, just a bunch of punks with long hair and they'd always just laugh at us. They'd walk by our room and look in there, "Hey, what's up? Got any pot? Can we have a beer?" Because our drum riser was made out of beer. Our guitar player worked at a brewery so our drum riser was… it was great. It was funny because a couple years later all those bands were opening for us. Asking us, "Hey, can we get on the show?"

I'm not really going to name bands, but it was more like I said, like a high school thing, where they had their clique, and if you weren't

one of the beautiful people they would just ignore you. And then once our scene got its own thing, when they came to our shows, they didn't get ignored, they got beat-up. I mean literally. It was pretty violent.

I think Paul Baloff was the culprit of that. "Kill the posers!' I mean at the shows, "If you see a poser out there, I want you to kill him. I want you to kick his ass." And if some guy was sitting there at the bar with his cowboy boy's drink, he'd be like, "Uh oh." But I liked going to their shows. I liked the girls, because there's always girls. When you're 18 and you want to check out girls, you go to a glam show. I think our shows, it was more guys. It was more punks and stuff like that. But girls started coming to our shows once we started getting popular.

Testament bassist Greg Christian on glam versus thrash:

I think a lot of it was that we were the outcasts and that was our scene. I don't know, that's the best that I can think of. They were like the high school jocks, they were the beautiful people, and we were like the burnouts on the other side of campus or in the parking lot. It was just boring to me, that music. Like Eric pointed out, I used to go to the glam shows all the time to go see the girls. Go get drunk at the bar. But the music was just boring. They had the song structures, but none of them had a riff. It was more about guitar-shredding, but a limp version of it.

Death Angel guitarist Rob Cavestany on glam:

You know how that story goes (laughs). Unfortunately, in the very meathead mentality of how the scene was back then, metal especially is to be blamed. It was actually just fun to hate the glam dudes and the posers (laughs). And Baloff was like the mayor for that. And you were just kind of flowing with the whole peer pressure of the thing. You come to see that these posers are lame, and you should kill them if you see them here. And pretty soon you are just glorifying how weak the posers and glam dudes are compared to the thrashers (laughs). But in retrospect, I didn't really hate these people. In fact, we were friends with lots of them. In fact, Jetboy, who was a major punk/glam band from around here, the whole hair going up and the whole shit, we were totally friends with the dudes in Jetboy, just from knowing them around.

Exodus guitarist Gary Holt on the glam rockers:

We were actually really good friends with a lot of the guys. One of my best friends in the early days, one of the old bands, was a guy named Bob St. Laurent, you know, not his real name (laughs). We just call him Poser Bob. But he had the same twisted view on everything that we did, and we hung out with him, and there were far more chicks at his parties.

And I hung out with Davy Vain more than once, and he's a great guy, and I actually liked the band. You know, back then you had to pretend, Lee and I would joke all the time; we'd talk about the fact that we all had to pretend that we hated Ratt and Dokken, where all of us guitar players were trying to learn George's licks and Warren's licks. Those guys are two of the best guitar players in the world.

As for Paul Baloff and all this, oh God, there are too many stories. Pick one, you know? There're so many urban legends concerning Paul that I almost don't want to squash some of them because they're so entertaining. People come up to me and say, "Hey, I heard about this," and I just smile. "Is it true?" "Yeah, of course it is" (laughs). It's just way better to leave those myths alive, like "Did Paul actually kill a poser?" All that kind of stuff. But him and I used to approach glam dudes, if they happen to be at Ruthie's Inn, and we would approach them with our pocket knives and demand that they let us slice up the T-shirt that they were wearing and tie it around our wrist like a little flag of honour. If you look at old pictures of Paul, he had like five inches of little cloth tied around his arm. That's what it all was. Ratt shirts and Mötley Crüe shirts and stuff like that.

I mean, if we were the school bullies, the only people we were picking on were the popular kids. You know, we weren't picking on the misfits and the outsiders. We were picking on the kids who had the girls, and the kids that had the girls quite often could pick right back on us themselves.

Slayer guitarist Kerry King:

We wanted to be everything LA wasn't. Not just to segregate ourselves from LA, but if Ratt and Poison were becoming popular, we wanted to be the anti-Ratt, the anti-Poison. Musically and physically, how we presented ourselves, and that just helped mould us into what we are. We were definitely OC. Played Hollywood here and there.

It's funny, in the early days W.A.S.P. was huge, and W.A.S.P. should have been huge; they were a great band. But how the LA scene worked is the headliner played second, and then there was another band. And we were that other band once. So we played after W.A.S.P. in their heyday when they were hot. The fire sign, all the good shit.

And it was one of the only times people stayed, because usually that's like the exit music. But we played it and it was cool. I think it was the Troubadour, actually. We kind of took over the Country Club in Sherman Oaks way back when. That became our stomping ground when we got some popularity.

So we never did LA. The Troubadour was a weird one. I can't even tell you… I think the first time we ever headlined LA, we might have done a Metal Blade night. I remember doing one with Savage Grace. I think it was a Metal Blade night, and I don't even think we closed that night; I think Savage Grace did. So it was before we got very popular. And then after that I don't think we headlined LA itself until we did the Palladium.

I thought hair metal was cheesy. Whatever music station you're watching on TV, and they do the metal of the '80s or something, and it's like Krokus, and of course Poison and that whole genre, and you look back and it's like, "This is such horse shit." To this day it just cracks me up. Yeah, there's some great songs. I can't say I'm a fan of any band, but there's a great song here and there. But just the way they presented themselves was alien to us. It's what worked at that time. I remember a certain record Priest did that I look back on with horrific thoughts. Just getting caught up in the moment and trying to cash in on what's popular. They tried it—I know they did.

Metal Rendezvous magazine founder John Strednansky:

In the early days it wasn't so partitioned. You had bands like Hans Naughty with Laaz Rockit; here's a show I'm looking at in '82. Head On were completely glam, so San Francisco's answer to Mötley Crüe, with Laaz Rockit, who were thrash, and Dammaj, who were a UFO-meets-Judas Priest heavy metal band, all playing on the same bill, at the Old Waldorf. Two weeks later there was Hans Naughty, another one of those Van Halen-type bands, and Roadrunner with Laaz Rocket in the mix. And it worked, because we were all there to have fun and enjoy good music.

Thrash photographer and D.R.I. bassist Harald Oimoen on the glam bands:

They were the complete opposites of the speed metal thing. Metallica would wear the same clothing they had on that afternoon and

get up on stage. They wouldn't fucking change and stuff. Paul Baloff definitely had a lot to do with the "Kill posers" thing. He just lived and died for metal. He was just so metal. I can remember numerous times some guy would wear a Mötley Crüe shirt unknowingly at Ruthie's. And Paul would take his shirt and cut the T-shirt up and take a little piece of the shirt and wrap it around his wrist like a souvenir.

Metal Blade Records founder Brian Slagel on thrash in LA:

The Whisky, the Roxy, the Troubadour, those three places were where everybody played, and Metallica, Slayer, Exodus, Savage Grace, Malice, Bitch, all those bands from those scenes played there all the time. Especially the Troubadour and the Whisky and the Roxy as well, all those bands played there countless times.

Even though people thought it was all glam here, there was definitely an underbelly of non-glam. You had Malice, you had Omen, you had Armored Saint, you had Bitch, you had Metallica, you had Slayer, and then as time went on you had so many of the thrash bands. You had D.R.I., all this stuff that was happening here. They were all playing here, then the Country Club in the Valley and Reseda as well was another hotbed.

But bands like Mötley and Ratt became so huge, they kind of dwarfed everybody else a bit. So even though there were all these other scenes here… and people always forget that Metallica started in LA, and they were in LA for quite a bit of time before they moved to San Francisco. So they were an LA band first, and then they migrated there because the scene was better for them there and the whole Cliff Burton saga and everything else. It's funny. The origins and the roots of American thrash metal are here in Los Angeles and not many people know that. There were good things that happened here.

Anthrax guitarist Scott Ian on his experience with glam on the east coast:

I was a huge Twisted Sister fan because I grew up in Queens and they were from Long Island. And as a kid, when I was 16, I used to sneak in the bars with big ideas to go see them, when they were pretty much a cover band. I saw Twisted Sister playing Priest covers. So I was always a Twisted Sister fan. But they really, really glammed it up. They were still... there was no way I could ever hate them, because they were such a part of my youth.

But as far as all the west coast stuff? Obviously, I mean, now you're going back to the days of, once again, to reference Exodus, Paul Baloff coined it perfectly when he said, "Kill posers." Because that's how we felt about the whole LA glam scene back in the day. It was an absolute affront to our sensibilities as musicians, especially

when they started lumping that stuff into the category of heavy metal. Because at the time in the '80s for us, we were metal, and that shit coming out of LA was pop music and pop and had nothing to do with metal. It was definitely a problem for us back then.

But out here in the east, if there was a glam scene, I don't remember it; '82, '83, '84, if there was, then I certainly wasn't aware of it. I really don't know. Because there really was never much of a glam scene on the East Coast. Not that I remember even in the mid-'80s. Once things started blowing up in LA, there certainly were bands that came out of New York and New Jersey, but not obviously that made the impact that the LA bands did.

But hating glam wasn't our only driving force (laughs). For me personally, truthfully, it was never like a battle that I needed to fight—I didn't care enough. At the time, certainly, I hated those bands, but my hatred of that kind of music didn't necessarily mean I needed to go fight a battle over it. I didn't care. I was so busy focusing on my own career to worry about what Poison was doing. I didn't care enough. I just chose not to listen to it.

March 27, 1984. Metallica play their first UK show, at the Marquee in London.

April 1984

April 1984. Agnostic Front record, at Demo Studios, the material that will comprise their first album.

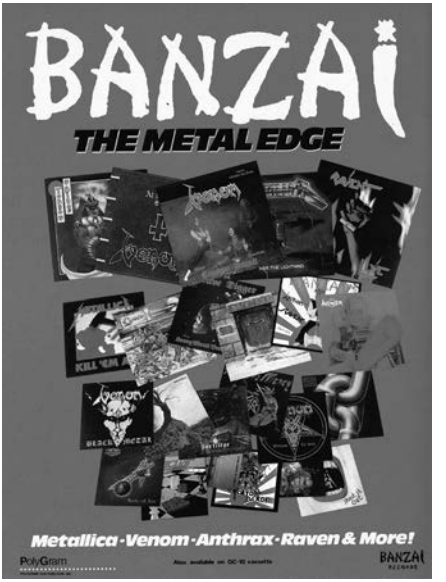
April 1984. Mark Osuegeda performs his first gig with Death Angel, the band supporting Megadeth at one of their four gigs that included Kerry King as part of the band.

April 16, 1984. Venom issue their third album, *At War with Satan*. It is the band's *2112* and *Hemispheres*, so to speak, with the conceptual title track taking up an entire side.

Venom drummer Abaddon:

I remember we were doing a European tour and Metallica were with us. Lars said, "Have you done any more stuff?" and I gave him the tape for *At War with Satan*. He was playing it on the coach when I went on. I climbed onto their tour coach and the thing was blasting.

It was him and Hetfield playing air guitar up and down the aisle. Venom had done something and changed again. It's the one album that I would like to go back and re-record, is the first side to *At War*, I guess, because I really love the piece. It's not finished is my feeling to it, and I'd like to go back and replay it and finish the job.



May 1984

May 1984. Noise Records issues the curiously named *Death Metal* compilation, consisting of two songs each by Running Wild, Hellhammer, Dark Avenger and Helloween.

May 5, 1984. Sodom issue their first bit of product, the *In the Sign of Evil* EP. Only "Witching Metal" heralds from the early demos.

May 23, 1984. Death Angel play The Keystone in San Francisco, supporting Slayer, the kings of the moshpit.

> Death Angel vocalist on the history of the pit.
> I would definitely say it comes from the punk community. And it probably started with pogo dancing, the old pogo thing. And

eventually music started getting heavier. It might have been from some guy pogoing and he steps on some guy's foot and he shoves you. Everyone just thought it was supposed to be shoving, and it just expanded from there. But it was just a general release of energy. And the thrash bands started eating it up, and injected it with steroids.

Death Angel guitarist Rob Cavestany on the pit:

And it was fun to do. But every pit back then, every show, stage-diving, I mean kids were fully just violently getting hurt in the pit at all times at every show. Yeah, thrash stole the pit. Because it definitely was the thing. We've had—and so many other thrash bands too—so many shows where the pit is so insane that the show had to be stopped because of some guy breaking his neck or something. So many people have been hurt badly in the middle of a song where you've got to stop the whole thing. It's like, oh man. People jumping off the PA, breaking things, stuff like that.

There's a good story about, in Concord, in high school, Death Angel played at our high school on lunch one time. Somehow they let this happen. They knew we had a band going. I think Mark was running for class president even, perhaps, which he ended up winning. He was senior class president while in Death Angel.

But we played at lunch. We had it set up and when lunch time happened we were out in the quad on the main outdoor amphitheater, and Death Angel played, and as soon as we played, people knew what was going to happen. People came from other schools, they invaded the high school, it just got completely out of control. And people started pitting and the staff freaked out. The principal ran into the pit to try to stop the thing and he ended up getting knocked on his ass. A girl got her arm broken while we were playing, during school. And needless to say we were never allowed to play there ever again. It made the school paper. Damn, we were huge. The Talon; that was the school paper. It made The Talon. We were famous.

May 30 – August 8, 1984. Anthrax perform dates in support of *Fistful of Metal*, supporting Raven, who are promoting their fine *All for One* album. Both bands at this point are under the auspices of Jonny Zazula, as Megaforce Records artists and as part of Jonny's Crazed Management International stable.

May 31, 1984. Tom Warrior closes the door on Hellhammer to birth Celtic Frost the following day, the 1st of June.

> Tom Warrior on his thrash-influential "death grunt" vocal:
> I actually heard it from some recordings by Arthur Brown in the '60s. It always fascinated me as a little kid. Then I heard it done by some heavy metal bands in the early '80s, like Iron Maiden with Paul Di'Anno; he used to do the occasional death grunt. I remembered that, because I always loved that kind of expression, so we did that in Hellhammer and it just took off from there. People started writing about Celtic Frost and the death grunt, and it became kind of a legend, without us wanting it to be (laughs).

> In Flames guitarist Bjorn Gelotte on the appeal of the thrash vocal:
> It's a different way of expressing an emotion. I think it's a very different way of trying to explain why something is fucked-up. It's basically not happy lyrics, so obviously you need some way to express this in a different way. You can do that with clean vocals too, but it doesn't have the same edge. It's not supposed to be beautiful. It's supposed to be difficult. You need to feel it, to really hear it. It's an interesting way of telling the story, on top of the soundtrack, but adding theatricals in it.

June 1984

June 27, 1984. *Ride the Lightning* is issued by Megaforce Records in the US. Jonny Zazula seems to recall being upset that the UK issue of the album, on Music for Nations, beat his US street date, implying that it was agreed it would be later, and also implying that import copies wouldn't cannibalize US sales (which they definitely did—the author's first copy was most definitely a UK issue, purchased in Spokane, WA).

> Megaforce Records founder Jonny Zazula on his relationship with Music for Nations:
>
> There are a lot of people who tried to hurt Megaforce very badly. One of the reasons Megaforce didn't have money when they could have was because the distributor would play around with their royalty statements, and you would get… instead of paying in 60, they go 30, you follow me? And when I had money, and I could've invested in Anthrax themselves, and they went to major, the money just never came.
>
> They were holding back on all my money. And this was Important; it was called Important Distributors, run by a thief named

Barry Kobrin. And he basically would change my accountings as I was driving to his place of business. And we audited them and found out they owed me a substantial amount of money, and they even tried to pay off my lawyer, to fuck me. Yeah, this is true stuff nobody knows. And those were the people who started their own record company, Combat.

Let me tell you something, they were really nasty. And because they had Important. Megaforce… they were so jealous of the fact that they couldn't get past us, and we kept selling and selling and selling and selling, and they were getting really hot under the collar. Instead of feeling great that we were making them money, they were figuring out how to screw us. So those were rough, rough times.

I had a run-in with Paul Baloff. When he was in Exodus. I don't know if he's alive anymore. Oh, we had a big, big fight, at the Kabuki movie theater I did with Metallica and Raven. Combat was trying to sign him, and I'm trying to tell him the truth. And he's telling me, "*You're* the fucking thief, *you're* the fucker, you're this…" And I'm telling him, "What did they tell you?!" (laughs). But we had a major blowout. Almost came to fists, over that. So those were strange days. So all I'm saying to you is that... and Music for Nations was owned by the major partner of Combat. So we would license to Music for Nations, and then all of a sudden, you see Music for Nations records all over the United States! Coming through the same place that I was trying to do mine. Do you follow me?

Metallica guitarist Kirk Hammett on *Ride the Lighting*:

When Cliff joined they were different, and then when I joined, we were even more different. You know, that's a 50% change in personnel, so when you think about that, that's half again. So of course it's going to change. But the thing was, we were so forward-thinking and so in-tune, and so in-sync with the vision, that it just went that much farther. Everyone was so motivated to be the best they could, as we still are now. For a young band, we had so much inside of us that we needed to come out that it's no wonder that *Ride the Lightning* turned out the way it was. It was four individuals with a lot to say and a lot to do, that hadn't been said yet.

We were at the beginning of our musical careers, and we had, as I say, a lot of music in us just itching to be squeezed out. So there's no wonder that *Ride the Lightning* sounds the way it does. We were all influenced by each other. We were all finding it really exciting, and also, we were really serious about it and did not let our guard down at all.

By the time that the *Ride the Lightning* demo was shaping up, and the rest of the songs for *Ride the Lightning* were shaping up, we were sitting on something completely different from *Kill 'em All*—I

mean apples and oranges. The great thing about *Ride the Lightning* and *Master of Puppets* is it really sounded like we were all finding our footing in the band. And after a while we just kind of fell into our roles in the band, that everyone has come to know today.

But back then, it was like we were finding our footing and finding how it all kind of fit and how our various contributions, musical and spiritual, made it all overall interesting. Metallica is much more than just songs, you know? Metallica is just much more than just four guys. It's what we create emotionally and spiritually, that contributes. It's all that that contributes to what Metallica is. Of course it's the music. I would say it's, you know, 75% the music, but it's that other 25% that is equally important in the overall feel and in what makes us who we are and gives us our identity.

The Headbanger founder Bob Nalbandian on *Ride the Lightning*:

Metallica were the first of the US thrash metal bands and they kind of set the blueprint. Even Slayer, they had a different sound than Metallica; when Kerry and Steve came over, they wanted to do exactly what Metallica did in terms of the tape trading and all that stuff, and they knew with my work they could do that. So everyone wanted to be like Metallica.

But when *Ride the Lightning* came out with "Fade to Black," even songs like "Creeping Death," they weren't just a thrash band. They really broadened their sound, especially with "Fade to Black." I wouldn't say mainstream, but a lot of people that weren't necessarily into thrash could sit down and enjoy Metallica. And they were being played on small stations in LA like KNAC. They always did something a bit different. Even if they did a ballad it would be a heavy, dark ballad like "Fade to Black" or "Sanitarium" or that kind of thing. That's something Slayer and Exodus never did, and probably by choice, which is fine. But Metallica weren't afraid to broaden their horizons. Obviously they have more of a commercial appeal than Slayer or Exodus.

I don't know if you want to get into this or not, but when I was doing Headbanger, everyone credited me for being this thrash guy, and it was my partner who was really big into the death metal stuff. I did the first stuff on Metallica, Slayer, and he did Exodus, Sodom, Hellhammer, all that stuff. Even at that time I was getting letters after Metallica had just broke with *Kill 'em All*, people saying they're pussies, they're posers, do more stuff on Exodus and Slayer. And then when Slayer had their record out and people saw they were wearing mascara, people were writing, Slayer, they're posers, they're glam, they have makeup.

That really turned me off about thrash, when thrash metal guys are telling me, "Don't write stuff on Iron Maiden and Judas Priest—that's pussy stuff. Do stuff on Hellhammer," that attitude was early on. You're always going to have those thrash metal fans that once you've sold over a thousand records, you've instantly sold out.

Of course with Metallica, *Ride the Lightning*, seeing them do a song like "Fade to Black," you're going to get a lot of the real dedicated thrash guys. I saw that more in the Bay Area than in LA, but you had those people all over. For as many fans that weren't into that, they had a hundred times more that were getting into that because of that change.

The Haunted guitarist Patrik Jensen on the impact of Metallica:

They picked up the pace, played a bit faster. They were a bit more outrageous than the generation before them. The first couple events that mixed the punk energy with the heavy metal side of things. They sounded dangerous. Judas Priest has lots to do with thrash, and these bands just played Judas Priest riffs a bit faster. Kerry King is a big fan of Judas Priest, so I'm sure they played a huge part in the development of thrash.

And hearing that first Exodus album, it was so tight. And when you ask them now, what equipment did you guys use? Hondo guitar with Hondo pickups—like what?! And listening to *Ride the Lightning* and *Master of Puppets*, every song had a different kind of riff but you never heard a riff being played like that before. It was mind-blowing. *Master of Puppets*, especially, for me. Like "Battery"—I never heard a song go with the triplets. Up until then, Iron Maiden, they played the single string riffing, all the melodies on a single string, and AC/DC was full rock chords. But at the time in '85, '86, '87, Anthrax had the heaviest palm muting I ever heard. The song "Madhouse;" when I saw that on MTV or whatever, it was like what is this?! I need to find that sound.

It was really cool back then because it was almost like you and your friends knew this secret; these bands. And you were looking for vinyl everywhere, and the general public didn't know about these bands. They were still going on about AC/DC and you went home and listened to Brain Fever or Dark Angel, and you were this close-knit unit of fans in your town that, oh, we're into this and nobody else understands it. It was the good ol' days.

The Haunted guitarist Anders Bjorler on the impact of Metallica:

The thing that changed music for me was hearing *Ride the Lightning*; it was the palm mute riffing and staccato riffing. That was something new for metal. Metallica just spoke to me and that's one of

the reasons I picked up the guitar. I wanted to learn the riffs. There's something fresh about it I can't explain. You get a tighter sound. You use the end of your palm to mute the end… the lower string, the bridge. It makes for more attack and more punch. So that was one of the techniques that sounded new and fresh to me when I heard it.

It had the attitude from punk, the energy and aggression, but apart from that, it's not very similar. Punk has more directness to it, and I think correlates to the lyrics more than thrash metal did. To me, thrash metal was more about music. Compared to punk, it's often more skilled musicians playing thrash metal. It's a challenge to play it. Every album we heard was great musicians that played very tight.

Thrash had some of the rebellion factors and freshness that punk had. Especially Metallica. It's hard for me to describe my feelings for Metallica because for me it was almost larger than life. It changed my life for the better. It's hard to see the impact on the other bands because Metallica was so much bigger than everybody else like that.

But also at the same time, it seems with thrash, the line between the musician and the fans disappeared a bit. In the '70s the rock god thing still happened, where we're the rock guys on stage and you're the fans. But it seems as though thrash broke that down a bit and it was more we're all in this together. It provided a new sort of unity. It was all about the crowd, the group.

In Flames guitarist Bjorn Gelotte:
All of these bands are something that we all love listening to. It's like a common denominator. Everyone knows most of these bands. At least they know some of the albums, maybe not the whole discography. But it's something that unifies us, something that brought us together. It's something we all have in common. When we are out touring, the there's always someone putting some Slayer on.

Metal Blade Records founder Brian Slagel:
The funny thing is, you talk about fans leaving and when bands get bigger. I remember vividly when *Ride the Lightning* came out, there were a large contingent of people who hated that record. Thought Metallica had sold out. What everybody called that record in the little underground scene was *Ride the Lightbulb* because they thought it was a sellout. So it's funny how people… that's still my favourite Metallica record, is *Ride the Lightning*. I didn't really like *Kill 'em All* much.

Mid-1984. Agnostic Front issue their seminal hardcore classic, *Victim in Pain*.

Important Records' Howie Abrams on the stature of Agnostic Front within East Coast hardcore:

Arguably Bad Brains would be the biggest. But as far as New York, when the hardcore scene really came into its own in New York, with New York bands that were born here and brewed here, the Bad Brains having moved here from Washington, DC... Agnostic Front from, let's say 1983 to 1986 or so, they owned this city when it came to hardcore. And there were a few other bands you can probably call peers throughout that period, but the sound of this city, the sound of what people recognize as New York hardcore was Agnostic Front.

I mean, what's funny, when Agnostic Front first came around, which was in '82, they were just kind of a sloppy mess. But they sort of modeled themselves after that Detroit band Negative Approach, and Negative Approach were very basic, primal, kind of guerrilla-style hardcore. But they also had really fast—like a blast of speed—sections to their songs. And that is something that Agnostic Front really came out with as well.

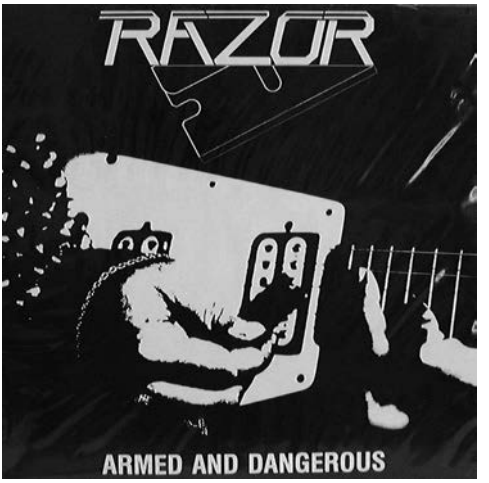
So when they did their first EP, *United in Blood*, in 1983, that was their sound. And if I had to liken them to any other band, Negative Approach would have come a little bit before them. So they were the band that really, I would say, brought the speed and thrash back to hardcore. And then, you know, if you go later, you'll see the guys from Anthrax and stuff just doing nothing but hanging around at Agnostic Front gigs, one, for credibility, and two, for pickup on how the thrash thing really worked.

Anthrax, at the beginning, sounded like Maiden and Priest, but they were trying to get signed by Johnny Z as well, and they became friends with Metallica even before *Kill 'em All* was recorded. So I think they got a lot out of that influence when they realized that they could put speed and the tempos on metal stuff, but still be musical—they got that from Metallica.

But I also think that they made it a little bit more of their own by seeing the hardcore bands from New York like Agnostic Front. Because those guys were playing fast before Metallica really did anything. So they kind of realized, well, there's a band in our back yard. They may not be a metal band, but they're kind of the same thing. And they started to go to those gigs, and I think they put the two and two together. At the same time, they never really abandoned their love for Iron Maiden and Motörhead; I think you could argue that Anthrax got as much from Motörhead as they did from Metallica.

Mid-1984. German speed metallers Living Death issue their Axel Thubeauville-produced debut, *Vengeance of Hell*.

Mid-1984. Guelph, Ontario's Razor issue their collectible debut EP, *Armed and Dangerous*. It's a form of speed metal that is perhaps already dated.



Razor guitarist Dave Carlo:

I felt the band would take off realistically, although we were too heavy to be mainstream. As being part of that scene, when I was 15, my friends and I would go down every summer to Toronto to the Record Peddler and we'd buy the heavy records that we couldn't get in Guelph. And we'd be all excited about discovering some new heavy bands. And there were a lot of people who did that, not just in Toronto. So I knew that when we put out *Armed and Dangerous* it was very intentional the way that that record was done.

I personally gave copies to radio guys like Bird in Toronto. I gave him five copies to give away over the air. I was a pretty good business man, even though I was 19. I knew that from give-aways we'd get some airplay for sure because they looked good and because they're giving some freebies away. And I look good because I'm getting some airplay which was cool. Even CHUM FM was supporting us. They had a show called the Power Hour back then and they played it a few more times than Q107 did. It was unbelievable. The thing was, we showed up on their doorstep with freebies. Free tapes, everybody gets them and nobody cares. Free vinyl, that was a different thing altogether. So we pressed it on vinyl.

Even the titles of those songs, if you remember that EP, those titles were contrived. I knew that if I was a guy going into that store and it's called *Armed and Dangerous*, what would make me buy it next? So I pick it up because it's black and white and turn it over and if the titles of the songs were cool, you had a sale. "Fast and Loud" and "Hot Metal"—heavy titles on purpose. The reason we even wrote a song called "Fast and Loud" is because we were trying to give people an indication of what kind of music was on there. That was the reason for the titles of all of the songs. It sold because of that. I know that as a fan. If I had never heard of a band before and I wanted to take a chance on it, I'd buy a band that had songs with those type of titles, if I knew it wasn't going to be like "Everyone Loves a Parade."

We did 1200 copies. I've got ten left myself, but that's about it. I could probably get rid of a couple more because I know that a guy in Germany told me they're selling for a hundred bucks apiece. The reason why it was only 1200 was because the people at Attic Records... I had to promise never to press it again. We could have made a lot of money if I had decided to press it around the *Evil Invaders* time. But Attic made me sign a waiver that I wasn't allowed to press it again. They gave me some cash for it, but that was the way it was. So that became a collector's item because I was forced not to press it again.

Exciter drummer Dan Beehler, comparing Anvil, Razor and Exciter:

Us and Anvil were a little along the same lines, in the way that there were slower songs on the album as well as faster songs; maybe more of a speed metal thing, as opposed to thrash. Thrash, to me, was a little faster and dirtier, like the first Metallica album, than the first Exciter album. We were more speed metal at times. And Razor was a little more like Metallica. So I don't think there was a real Canadian stamp. Canadian bands, hard rock and metal bands, that I was influenced by, might have had a common thread, but we were so damned interested in sounding like our mentors, which were all

British and German, that our music came out more like that. So, I don't think there's a Canadian stamp, to tell you the truth. We were just another band that were playing what our heroes played.

July 1984

July 1984. Anthrax play the Kabuki Theater in San Francisco. East and Far East meets West.

Anthrax vocalist Neil Turbin:

When we played in San Francisco at the Kabuki Theater in July 1984, I later read interviews where Anthrax claimed that I was disrespectful to the kids who were jumping on the stage and I pushed a few off. The reason for this is because I thought they were going towards Dan Spitz. I threw them back in the crowd because this had never happened to the band before at any show like it did in SF. This was the first time a bunch of people from the crowd jumped onstage, including James Hetfield from Metallica.

That's when I got the idea, okay, this is what happens now in metal. This was an amazing sold-out gig of 3000 screaming metalheads. The awful thing was that I was in bed with strep throat and a high fever and was at the hotel until just 45 minutes before stage time. I was in pretty bad shape and to be honest don't know how I pulled it off. Then in an interview done by the band somewhere, I read they said that I was disrespectful to the fans. What a steaming pile of shit! Lies! Utter nonsense!

I wasn't going to let some overzealous fan end our tour by charging at our guitar player at the time, even if it was Dan Spitz. I completely act on instinct when someone gets in my face. I was just helping throw a couple back into the crowd. It was actually a lot of fun. The crowd started jumping on the other side of the stage away from me since they knew better, which looking back was kind of funny. Nowadays they can jump onstage and do a lot worse things than that.

July 1984. Metal Church issue their self-titled debut, as an indie on Ground Zero Records. The album creates an instant buzz and sells 70,000 copies, prompting a deal with Elektra, who reissue it the following year. Producer on the project is Terry Date, who works with the band at Steve Lawson Productions in hometown Seattle, Washington.

Metal Rendezvous magazine founder John Strednansky on Metal Church:
The first album was definitely thrashier than people remember. I mean, that had a version of "Highway Star" on it which I think was even faster than Deep Purple's. Which was really cool. I think they were labeled in there, but you've got to remember, the true thrash didn't come later until things like Possessed, when the death metal thing started to influence even the thrash bands. So I would say Metal Church in the early days would be called a thrash band, but then they evolved more into a power metal band.

Elektra Records A&R rep Michael Alago:

I signed Metal Church. Oh, I love them so much! Well, Kurdt is fabulous. We talk all the time still. And I was very sad when Dave died. I remember going to a Metal Church show, I think it was at the Hammersmith, and I don't know, I think his name was Ray Parker. Do you member a Ray Parker from Kerrang!? I'll have to send you his picture. He was a crazy young kid with a mullet, with glasses.

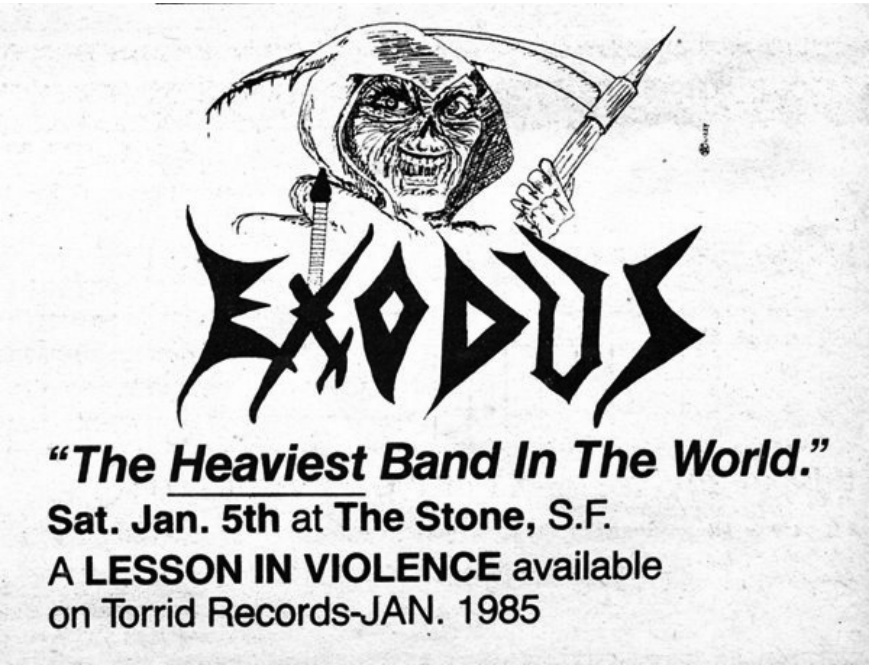
All I remember, was we had to get there, to the Hammersmith, on time. We were so drunk, early in the evening, that he was wheeling me down Kings Road in a shopping cart. And the minute we got there, he just threw me on the sidewalk, out of the cart, we made our way

in, we were headbanging, and I even remember, because I blacked out, we were so drunk.

And the next thing you know I was backstage, and Ron Laffitte, who was Metal Church's road manager, he says, "Alago, your head is bleeding." "What are you talking about?" Because my whole head was bleeding because I cracked it up against the monitor or something. So they bandaged up my head, and I don't remember, I fell asleep in Kurdt's room on the floor.

My head got stuck to the rug, so in the morning, the scab like peeled off, and, "Alago, wait a minute, your fucking head is still bleeding." "Well, I fell asleep on the floor, and my head got stuck to the rug, so I had to get unstuck from the rug, so it just fucking peeled off." There were nights like that and it was so fun. But when you're 23 years old, who gives a fuck?! You're raging, had an expense account, just running around the world. So I guess to answer your question, I did sign Metal Church and *The Dark*, produced by Mark Dodson, turned out to be one of my favourite records, just a great record.

July 1984. Exodus, working with producer Mark Whitaker at Prairie Sun Recording Studios in Cotati, California, record the tracks that will comprise the landmark *Bonded by Blood* album.


EXODUS
"The Heaviest Band In The World."
Sat. Jan. 5th at The Stone, S.F.
A LESSON IN VIOLENCE available
on Torrid Records-JAN. 1985

Exodus guitarist Gary Holt on Kirk Hammett leaving Exodus for Metallica:

You are certainty going to get people who are like, "Oh, Exodus I know them; that's Kirk Hammett's old band." That's okay. I am more than happy to be known as Kirk's old band, you know, because I love Kirk. Were we upset when he left? No, we had a big party for Kirk. Exodus was Kirk's band, not mine, when I joined. Kirk taught me my first chords on guitar and six months later they asked me to join the band.

He wrote most of the songs, but leading up to him joining Metallica, I was writing more and more stuff. Earlier, I was writing songs, but mainly just for me as it was still Kirk's band at that time. It wasn't like Kirk was saying, "Oh I am not going to use your stuff." It wasn't like that at all. I had stuff like "Strike of the Beast" and "No Love" in the can. But his like parting gift to me was, "Here the band is yours now." So the band got a little more crafted in my image, our image; we upped the violence level and just kind of went for it. So it worked out best for everyone, especially him (laughs). It worked out really well for Kirk.

Things really turned around for us when we found Rick and his subsequent development into becoming one of the greatest guitarists in the world. We had a couple of other guitar players in who were good in their own right, but they just were not right, you know. When we first found Rick, we just loved his attitude. His first show, we supported Loudness at a sold-out show in San Francisco and he spent the whole show facing sideways to the crowd. He never played a real show before and his stage fright was overwhelming and then the guy goes on to becoming one of the most dynamic stage performers ever.

We ended up on Combat after *Bonded by Blood* because we signed to a total upstart label Torrid Records, which was two guys from New York, Todd Gordon and Ken Adams, that decided to start their own label, and they're still really good friends of mine to this day. But I think they were a little bit in over their heads. Todd still says the biggest mistake he ever made was selling *Bonded by Blood* because they got almost nothing for it. The album still sells to this day.

So Megaforce, they were instrumental. They signed Metallica. Metal Blade got Slayer. We were on Combat, Megadeth was on Combat, as was Possessed. So they were our outlet. That was the only way we could make albums. But there was a time when we hated all those labels and we thought they were the enemy and we all wanted to be on a major. Then we realized it was much better to be the big fish in a small pond than the guppy in an ocean. I miss those days; the days when the label actually cared.

Anthrax drummer Charlie Benate:
I've always been a fan of Exodus. Always, always, always. I figure the *Bonded by Blood* album is the best thrash album by any of those bands. And a friend of mine was financing, he started a label, and he put *Bonded by Blood* out. And I was a fan of those guys from day one. The songs on *Bonded by Blood* to me are fucking classics.

Scott Ian, on the definition of thrash:

It's hard for me to explain in words. It would be easier for me to just say just put on *Bonded by Blood* by Exodus. I mean, I don't know how you explain sounds; I've never really been able to do that. You ask me what the characteristics of classical or pop or this or that are, but it's just a sound. It's a sound, it's an energy.

To me, one of the classics of the genre would certainly be that record, and certainly *Reign in Blood*. I can name a hundred records. But it's hard for me to explain the sound. I could be generic and cliché and say well, it's fast, and maybe there's double bass and really aggressive riffing. But that could be 20 kinds of different metal these days. Back in 1984, we just took everything that came before us metal-wise and tried to just give it a kick in the ass.

Thrash photographer Bill Hale on Exodus vocalist Paul Baloff:
He's the craziest motherfucker I ever met (laughs). Yeah, I never felt comfortable with him. I mean, we were friends, but you never knew what he was going to do. And everybody will tell you that. You just didn't know what he was going to do next. He was just crazy (laugh). I don't know if it was his upbringing, or if he was just not able to understand... he was like the bully in school, but he wasn't like a bully, but maybe one less than the bully. And like I said, we were good friends, but you just didn't know what he would do next. He would scare the living days out of me sometimes even though I never saw him do anything destructive; he just had that attitude about him.

Chuck Billy on Paul Baloff:

Paul was a one of a kind person. I did one of my first demos up at a place, Cotati, Prairie Sun, and I was recording… actually we were mixing, and I heard this screaming coming from the studio next door and I'm like, what's going on? I was doing a demo for a project that was more like melodic metal, and I hear this screaming, and they're like, "That's Exodus doing a record next door." I'm like, really? Exodus, huh? They were recording *Bonded by Blood* there, and you know the lyrics on that, and I just hear Paul. I can't hear the music, I just heard a guy screaming in there. So my first thing, I get introduced to Paul Baloff at Prairie Sun, and from that point we kind of were

friends forever, and then we started bumping into each other through the scene, and seeing him at ten of his parties and all the other parties. But Paul was always a genuine guy and loved to have a good time.

Him and the glam metal thing… there was a lot of drinking going on, and it was something that was started and it just kind of grew into this thing, hating posers. It's funny, because 20 years later, I've seen some of them now and they're business guys and have jobs and families and we've actually talked and they've said, "You guys used to scare the shit out of us back there in the '80s, man." And it's like when you're told that 20 years later, it's like, yeah, okay I guess it was pretty scary times for them. It was like we rid the city of the rats and sent them down to LA—it was that bad. It was bam, gone. There was nowhere left to play. There was nowhere left for them. The owners of the clubs, they were kind of siding with the metalheads, you know?

Testament guitarist Eric Peterson on Paul Baloff:
Disturbed. He was really cool, because whenever he came into the club he'd have his dog with him, which was half wolf. When we first came in and started playing the clubs, he liked us right away. He had a lot of house parties, and we'd go to them and wreck his house. He'd be upstairs and everybody else is downstairs partying. He'd be up there with the candle lit carving something in his flesh.

Brandon Geist on Paul Baloff:

One guy who typified this idea of identification with thrash was Paul Baloff. He would be on stage shouting, "Kill posers" and if you talk to Scott Ian, Scott Ian is like, "I'm not sure he didn't actually kill some posers in his day." Paul Baloff would walk around and if he saw someone in a Mötley Crüe T-shirt, he would basically bully them into letting him cut his T-shirt to shreds and then he'd wear those shreds around his wrist. So his arm would be covered with shreds of other people's hair metal shirts.

And that was the whole spirit of thrash. Thrash is awesome, and not only is thrash awesome, if you don't love thrash and you love something that sucks, we're going to tell you. That was something that made thrash awesome. It was kind of self-referential in a way. Bands like Metallica in some of the songs off *Kill 'em All*, they talk about themselves. You listen to "Four Horsemen," it's pretty obviously who the four horsemen are—it's Metallica themselves. Or you listen to songs like "Metal Militia" or Anthrax "Caught in a Mosh," Testament "Jump in the Pit," it's a call to arms but it's also a call to brotherhood.

I think there's a sense that thrash was very consciously trying to build this sense of community, and it was also very self-aware. It was about defining themselves as being outside the mainstream. It was, this is thrash metal, we are the metal militia and everybody else sucks. They're the enemy, and if you're with us, you're with us, and if you're not, then you're against us. That was very true to the whole vibe of thrash. Thrash was very agro and in-your-face. This is who we are and if you don't like us, tough luck.

July 27, 1984. Pantera issue their second album, *Projects in the Jungle*. The local legend of Diamond Darrell grows.

August 1984

August 1984. Dark Angel work at Track Records in Hollywood on the material for the forthcoming debut album, to be issued by Azra.

August 1 - 3, 1984. Elektra A&R Director Michael Alago and Q Prime co-founder Cliff Burnstein attend a Metallica concert (separately) at the Roseland Ballroom, after which the band signs to new management with Burnstein. This was billed as a Megaforce Records show. Jonny Zazula didn't take the news so well. The bill consisted of Metallica, Anthrax and Raven. Metallica's set list was: "Ecstasy of Gold" (intro music; this was a suggestion of Jonny Zazula's), "Phantom Lord," "The Four Horsemen," "For Whom the Bell Tolls," "Creeping Death," "Ride the Lightning," "Motorbreath," "The Call of Ktulu," "Seek & Destroy," Cliff solo and "Whiplash."

Megaforce Records founder Jonny Zazula:

Michael Alago had had an interest in the band, was crazy about James. And we were just proceeding and proceeding, and then I guess it was… I don't know how it transpired away from me, but I think what happened was, as we were developing the deal, we were losing the band? So there was no sense in going forward?

What cinched all the deals was the Midsummer Night's Scream, that we held at the Roseland Ballroom; it was the Roseland Ballroom's first metal show. We did the first shows at the Roseland Ballroom that were metal; we did the first shows at Studio 54 that were metal. We had Anvil and Anthrax play Studio 54.

So this particular show was sold-out, 3500 people, and nobody knew who the bands were that I had. And that night, everybody came to see what the hell was going on. It's our show. We promoted that show. There were 3500 people and everybody was there from all the record labels. They were all there, and they had to sit there and see these people they never heard of play to all these radical devotees. Because the crowd was nuts. And when James just climbed up on the monitors and looked at the crowd and said, "Guess who's back in town" the place went nuclear. It was a really brilliant night. Surprised everybody and it was the beginning.

But we were under a real microscope. And that night I saw the head of Elektra, but he was with Cliff and Peter. And I figured, well that's where that's definitely going. And I really paid it no mind, because you have to realize, when you are working with people, if they don't want to work with you, what, are they going to make you crazy? It's not worth it. It's just... you have a life to live.

And it was getting a little crazy. At that point. We all knew what was going down, but we were tightlipped. They didn't want to come out and tell me and I didn't want to ask any questions, but I knew. And we just let it take shape, rather than having conversations about it. You know, I never had a conversation, "I broke you guys, I made you guys, blah blah blah, I gave you your first album." I never had that conversation with them. It was like, if you feel after all this that you have to go, then by all means, just… let's work out something legally. Which I don't discuss."

You have to realize, they had us shopping all three bands. And while we're shopping all three bands, the bands are touring. The three bands are Anthrax, Raven, and Metallica. And we never—Megaforce—never really expected to be Atlantic Records or Elektra or Sony or CBS, Columbia, whatever it was then. We knew our limits and felt that if we wanted our bands to grow, the best thing we could do was move on with some kind of relationship with the people and

let them go and run at another label. And we had been to Elektra… Michael Alago had a lot of interest, we heard Zutaut was interested, and those were known ears even in those days, to me. We started a little buzz there and then Cliff and Peter were able to hone it.

As for meeting Cliff, I think they were seeing Cliff, possibly towards the beginning, right before the *Ride* cycle. During the *Ride* cycle. We had already sold 75,000, which was unheard of, and the deal was, I would sell the 75, and then they would move on to Cliff and Peter and Elektra.

But when *Ride the Lightning* came out in relation to that show, you know something? I don't remember and Michael doesn't remember. And that was the night we fired Neil Turbin, and they were still doing their first album, Anthrax. So the odds are that this was... well, they'd already done *Ride the Lightning*; it was already recorded. I think *Ride the Lightning* was being recorded and shopped or… I don't know. Please, Martin, you're going to make me say something I don't know. It was all happening so fast back then. All I had to do was touch something and everybody wanted it. But I think there were copies of *Ride*, as far as the tape goes.

I have to tell you something. First of all, Marsha and I didn't know anything about the business. We performed a miracle. We took every penny we owned, we didn't pay our mortgage, we didn't pay to have the records in the shop, we were up to our ears, we believed we had the next Led Zeppelin and the next God knows what and the next God knows what, because we believed in all three bands, not just one—I was a big Raven fan too, you know.

And everything just happened, as I said, so fast. Now, in my later years, I have a tremendous sense of what it is to be a manager and all that. And be a record company geek. But I didn't then know where I was at, but I do know that I didn't know much. I thought I did (laughs). And by the way, that scared people, because remember, Metallica didn't want to be the one thing that I made famous. They didn't know that I would have success with Anthrax and Ministry and Testament, and somewhat of a success with King's X and Ace Frehley. We sold 400,000 of all that stuff. So if they would've known, things would've been a little bit different. But they were worried.

And you know what's funny? Crazed Management was an unproven management company. You didn't know if it was Zazulas and Metallica because they were always together. You didn't know if it was Metallica. You didn't know if it was Zazulas. We were told we did a mega-million dollar job in breaking that band. A mega million dollar job breaking that band, and it was unbelievable how we burst through the liner with that. And we were given the credit as the

founders, discoverers of Metallica and breaking them, etc. I mean how much more do you need than that? Our ego maybe was big at one time, but we're pretty mellow now, these days, you know?

But the only way forward was a parting. And Lars also had his eyes on the shining stars. He wanted to be with the people who handled like a Def Leppard; that's what he was looking for. And it worked brilliant. I think it went down as poaching, but it was all cool because Cliff and Peter… I think they did a brilliant job with them. I will tell you that it broke my heart. I think it affected me mentally for years. But I think after X amount of time I can honestly say I'm over that feeling and I'm just grateful to be part of that history.

Megaforce Records co-founder Marsha Zazula:

It cost so much money back then to promote the band. We got to a point where we had put everything we had on the shelf for them, and just literally didn't have any more money to put behind them, and I think they were a little bit skittish at that. I don't know if they felt they wouldn't have had proper momentum. And I assume when the sniff of some fresh money came their way… because Lars had a goal, you know? He just kept with his goal. If I can't get to the distance I need to here, then let me move over here so I don't lose any footing.

And they've complimented us, as has Elektra Records, for the quality and quantity of job that both Megaforce and Crazed did for the band in getting them up on their feet. But it hurt; It absolutely hurt. It made me wonder if I would want to invest myself in another band, but at that point we had Anthrax going and they endeared us to them so much. They were neophytes when they came to us, whereas Lars always had this picture in his mind.

Metallica had this mindset—they were rolling. Because Anthrax came to us at such a neophyte stage, where we did it all together—meaning the band and Jon and myself—in the creation and the development of them, I guess we just went that way. It was like okay, you do what you have to do and these guys really love us and they really believe in us, and so let's carry the torch forward that way… and I love what Anthrax did.

Metallica drummer Lars Ulrich on the Roseland show:

The main thing that happened at that was we got a chance to meet Michael Alago, who was an A&R man at Elektra Records, and he—God bless him—wanted to sign Metallica to Elektra Records—imagine that. So it was Raven and Metallica. It was August of '84, we had finished recording *Ride the Lightning* but it had not come out yet. And we were in New York for this one-off. It was a big show,

three or four thousand people. It was the biggest show up until that point and certainly the biggest show that any of us had been involved in, including Jonny Z.

And this super-friendly guy just shows up backstage and he's got a big smile on his face, and it's like, "I'm Michael Alago and I'm with Elektra Records and can we…" He took us off to dinner and bought us drinks. He took us cassette shopping. He walked us into a record store and was like, "Go grab what you want." He took us to real restaurants. I'm not dissing anybody here, but it was a different thing than bologna and ham that we had been used to eating, and we were suitably impressed, of course.

Long story short, then at that same time, these guys from Q Prime Management started calling and had heard about Metallica and had seen lots of Metallica T-shirts in London. And there was a record store called Shades Records, legendary place, and I guess they asked about Metallica in there. I got a call from this guy Peter Mensch one day, who was this legendary guy who managed Def Leppard and had been involved with AC/DC, and this kind of all happened right at the same time in July and August of 2004.

And all of a sudden, in the course of a couple weeks, then other record companies become interested because when one record company is interested, then all the rest of them become interested and the whole thing escalated. We got ourselves some new management and a new record label and it went very quickly all of a sudden. It was kind of a crazy time, but in some way it seemed… I don't think we slowed down long enough to even take it in. But in some way it seemed like we were just on an E-ticket ride and it seemed the next logical step, the next part of the E-ticket run. We had no idea what the fuck was going on, but all of a sudden we were eating and drinking better and we liked it.

Metal Blade Records founder Brian Slagel on Lars' ability to get things done:

They never would have predicted they'd become this big. But the one thing about Lars is he was one of these guys… there's a lot of people that talk shit, and they say I'm going to do this or do that, but yeah, whatever. Lars was the guy who would say stuff like that… when I first met him he used to have a drum set sitting un-put-together in the corner of his bedroom. He'd say, "I'm going to put together a band" and I'd say, "Yeah, sure you're going to put together a band." He's like, "I'm going to go hang out in England for three weeks and go see Iron Maiden, Diamond Head, and Motörhead" and all this stuff. We're all like yeah sure.

So he goes, and we get a call one time and he's like, "Guess who I'm talking to right now." And I say, "I don't know Lars, who are you talking to?" "I'm talking to Brian Tatler from Diamond Head." "You are? Really? No way, that's impossible." He puts on Brian Tatler. Holy cow.

A couple weeks later, "Guess what I'm doing?" "What are you doing?" "I'm in the studio with Motörhead." "No you're not." Lemmy Kilmister comes on in the background. He actually went over there and did it. He became friends with these guys. How does some little kid… we're like how did you do that? He'd do that.

Same thing, when he came back and decided to start a band, and same thing with them opening for Saxon. How do you do that? When there's a million bands who would kill to do that, here's a band with nothing going on, aside from being on a compilation album. He somehow talked them into letting them open for Saxon. He was a guy that whenever he wanted something to happen, he would make it happen, and that always impressed me. And it went on and on.

Even the whole Cliff Burton thing. There was another great thrash band, that never existed really, was Trauma. They were on *Metal Massacre 2*, they're from San Francisco, and Lars was looking for a new bass player. Lars called and said, "You got any suggestions?" So I said, "About a week from now there's this band Trauma coming down." I'd seen them before and Cliff was just insane. Ron's good, but Cliff is at another level. I said you need to come see this guy play because he's really good. So James and Lars came to the Troubadour and Lars told me that night, that guy's going to be our bass player. And sure enough, a couple weeks later he's their bass player.

So he would make stuff happen. Once things started to go to that level you felt he had that drive. There were so many things he said he was going to make happen, and I'd go okay sure, and he made them happen. And that's pretty impressive, and it's hard to do.

As far as the music goes, I've known him for so long and they never set out to be anything other than what they were. And even as they got bigger, it wasn't like they were… there's no master plan in Metallica. It's not like, "Hey, we're going to be the biggest band ever; we're going to do this and that." They are who they are and they're influenced by what they're influenced by. As they got bigger, sure, everybody wants to become more successful and popular, but I think in a lot of ways they did it the right way.

I think a lot of people look at the whole Napster thing and go they became big pretentious rock stars but they're not. They're the same guys now as they were then. I think they've done a phenomenal job of having success and doing it the right way.

Journalist Xavier Russell on Metallica's label negotiations:

I obviously knew Metallica quite well, but when they started to get popular in this country, Music for Nations had them, and that's Jim Howard and Martin Hooker. And Jonny Z was sort of patched up with them in America. And Peter Mensch was sniffing around them, because they were in the press all the time. He was looking for an alternative to Def Leppard, I suppose, and he actually bumped into me at a concert, and said, "How the fuck do I get in touch with Metallica?" This is pre-mobile phone days. You could never get in touch with the band.

So I had a number for Kirk Hammett's mother, and I phoned her up, "Yeah, yeah, how are you doing Xavier?" And I said, "Can I get in touch with Kirk quite urgently?" And she says, "No, but if you phone the public phone box…" This is a public phone box somewhere just outside San Francisco. So I phoned them up, and then I got through to Lars and I said, "Lars, Peter Mensch is seriously interested about managing you guys." "Quick, give me his phone number." So I informed Peter Mensch back somewhere in New York. I said, "Peter, you've got to phone the public phone box at a certain time, and Metallica will be waiting there to field your call." And that's how it happened.

And I think Jonny, he must've got some sort of payoff. But I think in a way he could see it coming, and at the same time I think he was sort of partly proud because he sort instigated it. He must've got some little payoff. But deep down he must've been hurt, is how I see it. But hey, he was there, and it was sort of all right. He just built this thing from a small room in New Jersey, and then he did the first album, really.

I went to the induction thing—Metallica and everybody else in Cleveland—and the only person missing was our Megadeth man, the guitarist. And I said, "Why wasn't he there?" And Lars said, "We tried to get him, but he just wouldn't come." But apparently I found out since, apparently at this induction, you had to be on the album or recorded on it, but everyone knows he did most of the first album.

I just think it was sour grapes because of the whole Megadeth/Metallica thing. Even the black guitarist Lloyd Grant was there. He was there, he turned up, and Ron McGovney turned up. And Mustaine was the only one not there. But having seen them with Mustaine, I can see what the problem was. Because on stage they looked very, very similar—they looked like bad brothers who didn't get on. It was like watching two boxers that hated each other in the ring, having a fight. But that's what made it much more appealing. But because they were so similar, and they were both hogging the

limelight all the time, it made it much more fascinating. But I still think that was the classic lineup.

Interestingly, I know there was a point where Bronze Records was about to sign them, but they never did. The label that Uriah Heep was on. And that never happened. I never heard back. There're so many stories you hear, and they did spend a lot of time over here doing that album. So it could be true. Because Bronze Records were quite big in England at that time, and Gerry Bron was the son of the other Bron who ran it, and I think the problem there was, he wanted to also manage them, and I think that's where it all sort of fell apart.

But they didn't really need him to be a manager, so they pulled out at the last minute, and I think that's where Music for Nations moved in, and that's when the whole Mensch thing happened, shortly after that. So that's true, that could've almost happened. The guy was called Gerry Bron, and he ran Bronze Records at the time, but because he wanted to manage them at the time... but they very nearly did take them up. It was quite close at one point. And then Metallica thought about it and said no, we'll stick with how we are at the minute.

Exciter vocalist and drummer Dan Beehler on Jonny Z and Metallica:

Jonny Z, I have tremendous respect for. I think Jonny Z was one of the first guys to break thrash metal in America. He was the first to bring Accept over; he was the first to bring Venom over. And you know, at one point, I was looking through my scrapbook a while ago, and us, Anthrax, Metallica, The Rods, Venom, we were all on Megaforce. It was just a special time. I think Jonny had a vision that something was going to be huge, and he took good care of us and obviously look what happened to Metallica and everyone else. But he was like a major, major player in everything that happened back then.

But Metallica, I remember those guys when they didn't have two nickels to rub together (laughs). And we would all hang out, we were all on the same record company, and at one point they had all their gear ripped-off in Boston. You know, everybody was drinking and partying heavily, there were a bunch of bands that were coming to the forefront of thrash. At the time I didn't really realize how big they were going to be. It could've been any one of the bands, but you look back now, and you realize, all you have to do is put on *Kill 'em All* and *Ride the Lightning* to realize how special they really were.

Anthrax bassist Frank Bello:

I love Jonny, of course. He's one of the innovators. Remember, he took a lot of great chances and he should be noted for that. He's a great man. He showed people what was out there. I mean, he would

really listen to these records and he would say this is good. And you've got to give credit where it's due. Jonny was an innovator—he was there in the beginning.

August 4, 1984. Slayer's *Haunting the Chapel* EP is released.

Slayer guitarist Jeff Hanneman on *Haunting the Chapel*:
That's when we were getting pretty much out of anything outright melodic. I think "Crionics" was the last thing that had a bit of a Maiden feel to it. That's when we said we just wanted to be heavier and faster. So those songs are definitely ballsy.

Slayer guitarist Kerry King:

I think we were writing better songs by *Haunting the Chapel*. You've got to remember, we were like 18 when we wrote all those songs on *Show No Mercy*. *Haunting the Chapel* came out a year or a little more later. But in that short time, we were listening to more music, getting more influences, writing more intricate music. Something like "Chemical Warfare" of all things, that's not like anything on *Show No Mercy*. It's got like five million parts in it (laughs).

So we were learning to make longer songs, for better and worse, learning to time our riffs together. And I think we started doing what I call wasting riffs, having like a one-timer come up in a song (laughs). It's like, "Don't want to have that in the song?" And it's like, "No, don't need it!" You know, we still do that today. There's one of the new songs, and Jeff was trying to get the riff in twice, and we were putting it in, and I was like, "No man, you don't need it; take it out." And they said, yeah, you're right. Unfortunately you have to waste riffs sometimes, but it's for the better of the song.

Slayer vocalist and bassist Tom Araya:
We came out with *Haunting the Chapel* an EP single because everybody else was doing it and Brian wanted us to do one and we had three songs so we did it.

Metal Blade Records founder Brian Slagel on the origins of the thrash vocal, double bass drumming, and how both were big with Slayer:

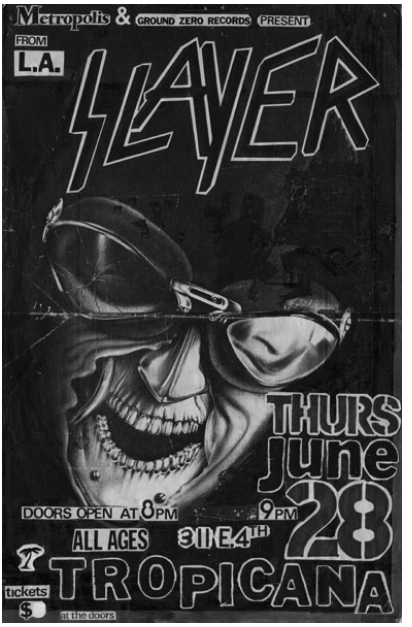
You had this really heavy, aggressive style of music, and when you try to sing like normal metal people sing, it wasn't as heavy. But you added this extra growl, grit and anger to it and it became heavier. And you'd go further down the line to the whole… that begat the cookie monster stuff you hear now.

I remember talking to the Slayer guys about it in the early days, and asking them why they wanted it to be really heavy and be really angry and more screamy, and it came from punk. All that came from punk where they weren't really singing, they were screaming and yelling, and had that very angry tone. And then you take the melody, because you still kind of have to sing to do metal, so you take that metal and then add that grit and that's where you had those heavier vocals. It matched the music much more. If you listen to Slayer, you couldn't sing over it. It's too heavy, it wouldn't work. There were bands that tried to do that and it wouldn't work. Or it just might sound like a slightly sped up version of Iron Maiden. It was a way for them to create something that was different.

And when it came to the drumming of thrash… drumming is such a huge thing in any form of music. Especially the faster you play, the better drummer you have to be. The punk movement was huge for those guys, especially for Lombardo because he got exposed to that. Drumming-wise, I always find it fascinating to talk to guys who play drums. "What are you really influenced by?" Lars or Lombardo will go off on jazz and fusion stuff, because a lot of those guys play that sort of crazy style, like Bill Bruford. Back in the '70s, he was doing all that stuff; he was doing double drums and he was doing all these crazy things.

And Neil Peart was another guy who was taking drumming to another level and playing this really super-fast stuff, and those guys were very much influenced by that. And then they took that to the metal world and listened to Judas Priest "Exciter," Accept, "Fast as a

Shark" off *Restless and Wild*. That's what influenced them to play fast. It was like hey, these other guys were playing fast. We can do it in this form of music. And as the music got more aggressive and faster, the drumming had to do that. And I think if you look at those two songs and also Motörhead, there you go, that's the style that really influenced them. They took a lot from those songs and made it into their own bands. But also there's outside influence of these crazy jazz drummers that were doing this really progressive stuff, too.



The Haunted guitarist Patrick Jensen on Dave Lombardo and *Haunting the Chapel*:
Double-bass drumming is a real important part of thrash, and when Lombardo started playing it… I spoke to Lombardo about his double-bass drumming and he told me it was Gene Hoglan that was at the rehearsal going, "You can do that faster—go faster" and he pushed Dave to the limit. I think it was during the recording of *Haunting the Chapel*. Dave told me he had these clear drum heads and his bass drums were always moving. So Gene was on the floor during the recording session holding the drums, so when he was drumming he could see through the snare when he was doing the double bass and Gene was on the floor holding everything together.

Sabbat guitarist Andy Sneap:
Haunting the Chapel and *Hell Awaits*… those brought us just a different sort of sound, particularly with the double-kicks. And also with the way triggers came into thrash. You listen to his early albums and you can't really hear the definition on the kicks and the playing is a bit sloppy but you don't really notice it. It's just this rumble that's going off and backing everything up. Now, because people tended to trigger new samples, it will really show a player up if the playing isn't tight. I can't think of anyone that was really doing that double kick except the jazz guys. You've got some of the old jazz guys that were doing some of the fast double-kick stuff, but it wasn't really pronounced before the onset of Metallica and Slayer, really.

August 10, 1984. Voivod's thought- and shock-provoking debut album, *War and Pain*, is issued by Metal Blade.

Voivod drummer Michel Langevin on the Voivod concept:

I imagined a universe where there would be many planets like that with many Voivods, but the one planet I was concentrating on was Morgoth. So there would be these guardians of planets keeping people from fucking up the balance of the universe, and at the very beginning they were just drawings and parts of ideas, but as I was moving on in the '70s, it was becoming more and more technological.

And also my initial trigger of radioactive clouds had turned into a full-blown fear of nuclear war. Then there was this movie on TV, a documentary called *If You Love this Planet*; that's where I learned about all these different kinds of nuclear weapons spread out through the planet, and how they could destroy… I don't know how many times the Earth would be destroyed, from this amount of weapons, but it could destroy many planets.

And also, of course, punk rock really helped. The Dead Kennedys, at the very end of the '70s and into the early '80s taught me a lot—that really helped for the Voivod concept. There were all these bands like Discharge, GBH, and also the more involved ones like Conflict and Crass, and I remember reading their lyrics a lot.

And at times, all through my career with Voivod I kept doing interviews where I would mention the danger of nuclear war and stuff like that, and it seemed to me like people were looking at me like it was outdated. And in my mind I was always like, "No, No, you don't understand! It's not like fashion; it's always there and it's getting crazier! Can't you see it?" But of course in the past couple of years it has become more obvious to everybody, with North Korea and Iran. But for a while in the '90s, it seemed like it was a hippie thing (laughs). And I was freaking out, because to me, they were still there… the weapons, they will always be there.

I would say around '78, '79, I had a notebook with the basic story, and then in the early '80s with Omni magazine and stuff like that, it was getting more precise and science-based. But it really gained a

voice when in 1983, we sat down with Voivod, and I explained that I would like the band to be called Voivod. And they're like, "Voi-what?" And I said, "Well, it's a story I wrote a few years ago, blah blah blah, vampire, nuclear war…"

And they really started to be cool with trying to develop it into an album, and then it ended up being many albums. And so I would say that in '83, when the guys agreed to do this crazy thing, that's where I really sat down and wrote a bunch of stories. But they were mainly almost poems I would make, and then we would incorporate that. But I also wrote a lot of stories for *War and Pain* and *Rrroooaaarrr* and also *Killing Technology*. When I wrote a bit of the story, I would usually draw a bunch of sketches around it. I would also hand that to the guys, just so everybody would be in the same dimension regarding the concept. Some of it I wrote on the road, which I then put into my computer. I then got rid of them because I had too many papers.

At first, it was more the Voivod and the people of the earth, but then I would think about, what would happen if there was a whole bunch of nuclear wars, and most of Morgoth is destroyed, and people are going underground, and there is not much happening? So I would think about the Voivod entering into a cryonic state—for about 7000 years. And then he would wake up if there would be tremors, you know, nuclear bombs exploding, and then start over again, checking out who is the good guy, who's the bad guy. If they're all bad, well, get rid of everybody. Like I say he's not really a hero; he's totalitarian. But if the Voivod wakes up after 7000 years, he's going to have to be a bit stronger than 7000 years ago, because people will have more high-tech weaponry than their ancestors, so the weapons are probably more high-tech.

And then for the album covers… for the first four albums, the covers are paintings. But they were the only four paintings I ever did in my life. I have no background in art or anything like that, so I just winged those and then soon realized that you have to work hard everyday to make it perfect, when you want to do paintings. So I'm not much of a painter in a sense because I only did four paintings in my lifetime.

My approach is always in the surreal aspect. But I try to get the vibe of the music because what I usually draw is totally improvised on what I'm getting from the music. Mainly when we were developing the Voivod saga in the '80s, I had a more specific direction. Now my art is pretty much surreal.

When I was a kid, I would see a Nazareth cover in the '70s and I would buy the album without even caring what's on the record. The time when it really hit me was with the first Iron Maiden album, where I just went, "Wow, this is the greatest album cover of all time!" But the music was amazing too. So maybe nowadays there are bands working this way.

Metal Blade Records founder Brian Slagel on thrash going global:

That was the amazing thing about how all of a sudden this scene went from starting some place to all of a sudden I got a demo from Voivod, like, "Oh my God, this is amazing," I got a demo from Sacrifice, "Oh my God, this is amazing." I heard Sodom and Hellhammer and Celtic Frost and thought, oh my God, these are amazing.

And all these things kind of tie into the same scene. It's hard to really if or how the bands here influenced them. For some reason all these bands had the same influence and must have grown up listening to the same things, same types of music, for them to create that same style of music. If I'm Sodom in Germany, or if I'm Voivod in the middle of Quebec nowhere, they didn't speak any English. How do you get exposed to this stuff? Somehow they're all listening to the same things and coming to the same musical conclusions in their heads.

That's something I'd like to do a case study on psychologically. Like if band A, B, and C happen here, how do bands D, E, and F happen here? Is it just the natural progression on, okay, if you listen to Iron Maiden, Judas Priest and Motörhead and throw in a punk rock band, that you get that? Or does it come from somewhere else? I don't know, it's fascinating. But when you see that happening on a global level, you see really good quality bands coming from everywhere, then it's, okay, this is no longer our little thing in our backyard. This is everywhere.

August 10, 1984. Destruction issue their first demo, *Bestial Invasion of Hell*, consisting of "Mad Butcher," "Total Desaster," "Antichrist," "Front Beast," "Satan's Vengeance" and "Tormentor." In other words, Destruction arrives from the onset, ready to thrash with the best of them.

Destruction vocalist and bassist Schmier on the Destruction sound:

Of course it's always been categorized as thrash metal. In the beginning we were inspired on the one side by all the punk stuff from the end of the '70s, beginning of the '80s. And then of course the New Wave of Heavy Metal was very influential on the band, and of course what you play after that is what they call thrash metal. Thrash metal really started in our founding year, which was 1984, with the Slayer release, and then us and Sodom and Kreator.

In terms of influence on this, Motörhead definitely, but not Bathory at all. I have the first album but had never been to into them. But of course Motörhead and also the first Venom release. But the early influences were Iron Maiden, Judas Priest and GBH. We had quite a strong image at the beginning and we are also quite extreme for coming out of the early '80s. Of course there was Slayer and Venom and that's it.

And then after that Sodom and Kreator came out. So I think we were one of the first bands to play this really heavy original brutal thrash style. And you know how it always is, the first bands are always the most remarkable ones. So I guess our style for the young kids was interesting and they started playing this music too. So it's really the way thrash metal starts and of course it was very important that there were other bands at the time that also had strong releases. We just tried to be true to ourselves and play heavy music and be extreme.

Mid-August 1984. Vocalist Neil Turbin leaves Anthrax. His last gig, as Jonny Z has alluded to, would be the Roseland show, also featuring Raven and Metallica.

Anthrax vocalist Neil Turbin:

Some decisions you choose to make; others are made for you. The writing was on the wall. Well, there were really mutual reasons leading up to what was inevitable. There was poor communication within the band and with management to the rest of the band, personal agendas, resentment, jealousy, disrespect, disloyalty and no pay! I hung in there for as long as I could tolerate it. I was only there for the music.

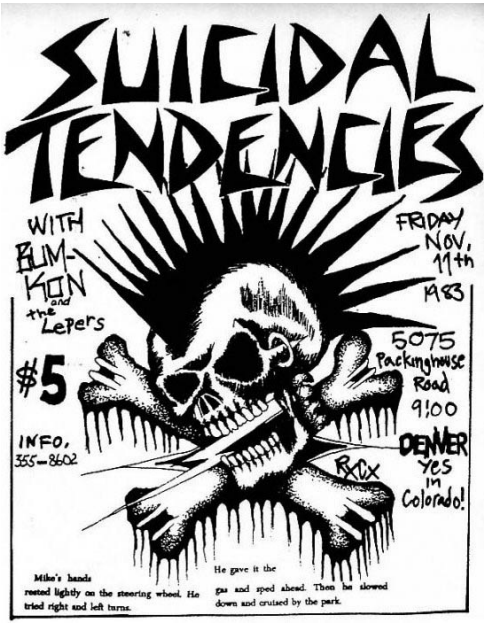
August 17 - 18, 1984. Gord Kirchin is in the studio recording his vocals for Piledriver's *Metal Inquisition* debut.

Gord Kirchin on the sessions:

I literally breathed life into Ol' Piley for *Metal Inquisition* at Leslie Howe's professionally equipped basement studio in a nondescript Elmvale Acres, Ottawa townhouse. How professionally equipped was this basement studio? What other row house in mediocre middle class

Elmvale Acres had an EMT plate reverb tank in the basement? Less than two or three, five at the most for sure. On breaks from me embarrassing a poor AKG-C414 (b-uls for the geeks out there), we would take a walk around the block in the cool August night breeze, C.C. or Capn' Morgan n' Cokes in hand, laughing at how insanely good this album was turning out, and how it would be impossible for people not to love it. Total "it's just so crazy it just might work" elation. With each progressively wobbly and increasingly satisfied break-lap of oxygen and booze, the various incarnations of a song title and lyric morphed into history. Sodomize your mom? Nah. Sodomize yer dog? Ha ha, but nah. Sodomize yer priest?! Nah. Sodomize the Pope? Hmm, not bad. It landed there for a while, but we felt the album was dangerously light on wanton necrophilia so we evidently went with "Sodomize the Dead."

August 19, 1984. Slayer, Exodus and Suicidal Tendencies play an outdoor show at the Aquatic Park, Berkeley, California.


SUICIDAL TENDENCIES
WITH BLIM-KON and the Lepers
FRIDAY NOV. 11th 1983
$5
INFO, 355-8602
5075 Packinghouse Road 9:00
DENVER yes im Colorado!
Mike's hands rested lightly on the steering wheel. He tried right and left turns.
He gave it the gas and sped ahead. Then he slowed down and cruised by the park.

Death Angel guitarist Rob Cavestany on when metal and punk came to a meeting of the minds:

Dare I say, it might have started when Ruthie's Inn, on San Pablo, Wes Robinson started putting together packages like Slayer

with Special Forces, metal with punks bands; he was almost forcing it to happen. Ruthie's Inn became this mecca for people to go to no matter what was playing, whether it was punk, metal, blues. Any night you'd go there, and even if it was a blues night, it'd be chock full of metalheads and kids into punk. That's what it was. And this little place became the marriage of the two, here in the Bay Area at least.

And then Wes started putting together these amazing shows there, and had this outdoor show called Western Front, I believe. It was Suicidal Tendencies, Slayer, Exodus, Raw Power from Italy. He put this thing together out in the park and got permits for it! And that was, I think, the biggest outdoor marriage of the two genres that came together. It was Suicidal and Slayer when they hit the stage, and Exodus. No matter what genre you were into, you could not deny the energy out in that crowd. Whether you were into punk or metal, you either had to get in the pit or stay the hell out of the pit. The energy was like that. So eventually people just embraced both communities.

But it was Wes Robinson, he would put together these shows… and I remember because we were on one at one time, and he was calling it a cross-cultural event. It even said on the flyer, "a cross-cultural event." And it was like us, and then there was punk bands, and then there was even trippy weirdos, like what idea is this? There's going to be fights at this show. And sure enough that's how it started off. I even remember feeling, just thinking, showing up, like maybe I was going to get my ass kicked because I see all these punk rockers out front, and I remember you didn't cross over like that. I remember pulling up and going, "Really? We're going to go here? All right, let's see." And sure enough, as time goes by… and that's just an odd feeling to think about that. It used to be that way. That's pretty real.

And the stage diving, the pit… you'd see sort of punk pits at some shows. The other thing, too, thrash had the punk influence but it was just even heavier. It was heavier than punk. I thought punk was heavy because of the way the crowd was and the punkers just looked heavy, with their Mohawks, like damn these guys are really heavy. But then when thrash came, and Metallica played it, it was just turbo-charged music. It was just way heavier to us. It was so much heavier than punk or metal that we'd heard put together. So that was just the ultimate.

August 29, 1984. Metallica embark on their second European tour, with this being dates in support of *Ride the Lightning*, issued the month previous. The album was issued by Music for Nations in Europe, hitting the shelves in advance of the US release date.

Megaforce Records founder Jonny Zazula:

In fact, I think they put it out one-and-a-half weeks early just to get a jump on me. Yes, they were horrible people. Horrible people. You know, we almost did Metallica at Par Studios, where Savatage did *Sirens*, which was a favourite of mine—we played that over and over. Yeah, we were so into it, but the guy seemed weird. I think he wanted money. He didn't want to do it on the cuff for six months (laughs). The day he asked me for money, we didn't exist.

So Music for Nations, you see what they were doing. They pretty much are responsible for the end of Metallica and the Zazulas, because of the way they mishandled Metallica going over to Europe. All the shows were canceled, the tour was canceled, and it was all mishandled. But it all came down on me. They were using my money. In other words, they had an advance of $30,000, and the tour canceled, and $15,000, to keep the band in England, to support them while they are there, and try to do some press. Then he would tell me my album budget was 15.

Do you follow me? There was our European advance, and when the band's tour got screwed up in the UK, it cost a lot of money to wine and dine them, and they wanted to show them how Music for Nations... everything could be so beautiful, you don't have to be with… we'll give you a beautiful apartment and this and that, to stay in England.

But that cost about 15 grand. So nobody knows that when it came time to do *Ride the Lightning*, they would only give me 15 grand out of the 30. They wouldn't give me the full 30 to record the album. So I had to go find a way to raise it. Yeah, shit was really rough in those days.

But *Ride the Lightning*… they were in the studio for a very long time, and they now took a break in England, because the album was supposed to be done. And we had gone through our entire budget for recording the album. And I came to England to hear the album, and all it was was some bass and drums. The whole album had yet to be recorded. So when I did hear the album, I heard the songs, and it was like the second coming. You know, you just knew. You just

knew, just like the third album. They just kept doing it! They kept up coming up with these fucking songs, man. And that's the great story of Metallica—they had songs. And boy, did they have songs.

September 1984

September 1984. Destruction work at Caet Studios in Berlin with producer Wolfgang Eichholz on what will be their seminal *Sentence of Death* EP, a German thrash original. Destruction spearhead what would be a German thrash movement, and even talk of a German "Big Four."

Exciter drummer Dan Beehler on thrash in Germany:
I don't know, the fans are more open-minded, they're more hardcore, they're more underground, especially back then. Germany and England was just crazy. They were ahead of the world, in the speed metal/thrash movement. And that's why we couldn't wait to get over there. And when we did get over there, it was mind-blowing. You know, you go to a soccer game in Canada and go to a soccer game in England or Germany, and it's two

completely different things. The crowds were insane, they were more educated, I found. Everyone over there was trying to get to America, and everyone over here was trying to get over there (laughs).

September – October 1984. Slayer work at Eldorado Studios in LA with Brian Slagel on tracks that will comprise their second album.

2 SUPER NIGHTS OF HEAVY METAL
FROM LOS ANGELES
SLAYER
with
WITCHKILLER
MONDAY, OCTOBER 29
Doors open at 8:00
TICKETS ON SALE AT LE SPECTRUM, ROCK EN STOCK, PHANTASMAGORIA & ALL TICKETRON OUTLETS.
DENMARK'S KINGS OF HEAVY METAL
Mercyful Fate
AND SPECIAL GUESTS
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 7
Doors Open at 8:00
ALL AGES PERMITTED FOR THIS SHOW ONLY
TICKETS ON SALE AT LE SPECTRUM, ROCK EN STOCK, PHANTASMAGORIA

Slayer vocalist and bassist Tom Araya on the influence of Iron Maiden and Mercyful Fate:

Yeah, you can hear Maiden on *Hell Awaits*. But when Jeff showed up at rehearsal with the Mercyful Fate EP with the nun on the cover on the cross—it said *Nuns Have No Fun*—he said, "I went to the store and bought it thinking it was a punk album." He used to buy EPs because of their covers, not because of the band. So he bought covers that were really cool looking and he put the record on and heard Mercyful Fate. "It blew my mind," he said. He thought it was really cool, so he brought it over and said, "You guys have got to listen to this." We're like, "Holy crap, where did you find this?" You'll hear that too, because of song structure and the length of songs.

When we did *Hell Awaits*, everybody was doing five- or six-song albums, really long songs. So we thought we'd do the same. When we recorded *Show No Mercy*, there wasn't any attention paid to time,

you know what I mean? We just recorded the record and we had ten songs and that was about it. And then when *Hell Awaits* came out, it was shorthanded in terms of songs, because records that were coming out at that time were all long songs. Everybody was writing long songs, so we thought shit, you know, we'll write long songs too. So we wrote seven long songs for an album.

Slayer guitarist Kerry King:

Hell Awaits, we were way into Mercyful Fate when we were making that record. So that's why there's like seven songs on it and they're all pretty long. That's about the only thing I can say about that. I remember that era. We were big-time into Fate, and Fate had all kinds of long songs with different kinds of passages and stuff.

But making our kind of music… probably first and foremost it was not wanting to be like the LA scene. Because those years, that was the beginning of hair metal. I think Ratt already had a record or two out. You know, I don't group Van Halen with those guys, because I've always dug Van Halen, those early records. But Ratt, Poison, Crüe came along. Crüe had some good songs early in their career, but I just wasn't into the hair metal, looking like a chick. So anything we could do to distance ourselves from that is what we did. But we liked Priest. Jeff was getting into West Coast punk, and that was pretty much the fuse of what made our sound.

September 12, 1984. Metallica sign an eight-album deal with Elektra Records.

Elektra A&R rep Michael Alago:

The first time I saw Metallica, I was doing A&R for Elektra Records in New York. I started at Elektra in March of '83 or so. I was doing demos with a power trio called Raven, for Megaforce Records, and that was like moving right along, and then somehow a friend gave me this record, *Kill 'em All*, I looked at it, turned it over, put it on and I lost my mind. It was like nothing I'd heard before.

I put on *Kill 'em All* in my office, turned it on loud, and like I said it was like nothing I'd ever heard before, and I just loved the energy so much. James' vocal style is incredible. I guess I just responded to how great the songs were and the energy. I was very used to getting demos and listening to demos on a day-to day-basis. What I loved about *Kill 'em All* was yeah, of course it was a mastered record that was out in the marketplace, but it had this very alive feeling to it. It didn't sound like the studio at all. I think that's what everybody who bought that record responded to, was the electricity, and the alive feeling of it all. It's not whatever you want to call a perfect recording, but the recording was so exciting that that's what got everybody from it.

I think you have to remember a lot of kids were still listening to the staples of heavy metal—Iron Maiden, Judas Priest, Black Sabbath, Ozzy—and then along comes this band from the Bay Area that people are talking about because they're extraordinary live. So of course I just had to get my butt to the west coast to see them and I did. I think it was some time in '83 when I saw them live at the Stone in San Francisco, and it was the most exciting thing I'd heard and seen in my life. Here I am, this young A&R person and I freaked out. I thought James was the most charismatic person I'd ever seen. I loved his smile and thought he was so radiant on stage.

I came back to New York and kept doing these demos with Raven. I didn't know what to say to anybody at Elektra. In San Francisco, I introduced myself to Lars to say hi and that I did A&R and the year went by. Some time in '84 he called me to say they're coming this summer to play Roseland with Anthrax and Raven.

So fast-forward to some time summer of '84, he was sending me some cassettes of *Ride the Lightning* because they were making it in that period of time. So I tell the chairman of our company—and I think it was Mike Bone, the head of rock radio—about the band and I asked them to please come to Roseland. I went that night by myself because I was so excited, and what I saw was nothing I'd ever seen before. James is a ringleader on stage, and when you have someone that charismatic I felt like I wanted to be involved with these people.

Roseland was a very exciting evening. I believe it was sold-out; maybe that's about 4000 kids. Everyone was young. I think they were so excited because they heard so much about all three of the bands, and to see them all on one bill was going to blow everybody away. When bands are special, like Metallica, Anthrax, Raven, there's a certain energy in the air that you pick up on because everyone is talking, everyone is drinking, there's no quiet time. It's loud and you're sweating and the energy is vibrating. That's what it was like.

When the show was over, I just made a bee-line backstage, passed security, passed everything, bolted the door, and there were other A&R people looming about from Sony but I was like heck with them. We talked for a really long time and I think what they liked about me was we were all the same age—we were all in our early 20s—

and they knew that I was ecstatic about the music and that I worked for a major label. The next day I had them come to Elektra and we just sat around drinking beer and having Chinese food. It really felt like they never left from there. It was very special.

I think what was different about Metallica in '83, '84 was yes, them among with a couple other groups in the Bay Area, created this sound called thrash. Metallica pulled from all different sources. They pulled from British heavy metal, they pulled from people they had been

listening to in the states, whether it be Black Sabbath or Judas Priest, and then they pulled from punk rock and hardcore, and this whole thing made this band called Metallica. Just to label them a thrash band is a bit unfair. Not that we're doing that, but that was a label at the time, I think just because of the ferocity of the music.

Again, I think what was different about their sound was they incorporated all these other influences, whether it was punk, hardcore, NWOBHM, what they'd been listening to here in the States, and it made this concoction Metallica, and that's what was so different to every other band that was considered thrash as well. Thrash was just so different to everything else we'd been listening to our whole teenage years, and I loved it because it was so wild and crazy, so loud and so fast, and I just loved the whole energy of it all. I remember when I first saw Slayer and Exodus—who to this day I still love—it was just a wild, crazy scene, and I responded to it and here we are.

I think what set Metallica apart from all the other bands that were up and coming then, whether it was Slayer, Megadeth, Exodus, Anthrax, for me, personally, I thought there were these four charismatic characters that had something to say and I wanted to be involved. As for Elektra, I don't know if everyone understood it, but what they understood was they were young and cool and dedicated to their art—crazy but dedicated to their art—and that everyone wanted to be part of that. So everyone did their job, whether it was marketing, publicity, promotion, people who gave tour support, and that's what we did when we signed them because there wasn't a lot of radio air play. We gave them tons of tour support and they just stayed out on the road. That's what I think helped sell the records, other than being extraordinary live.

Lars was always the person I spoke to—he was their spokesperson. But on stage James is the ringleader and that's what I gravitated towards. I think from all the press I read and hearing *Kill 'em All*, getting these cassettes from him, the beginnings of *Ride the Lightning*—which is such a different record from *Kill 'em All*—I knew these were people who were dedicated to their craft.

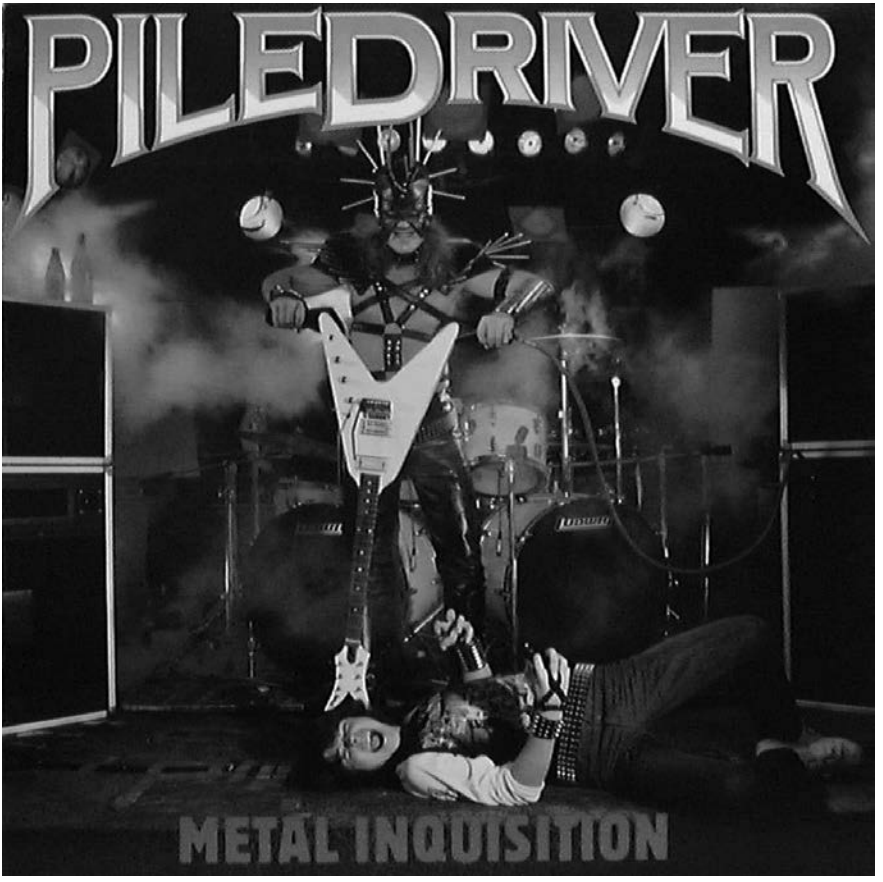
September 15 – late 1984. Slayer work with Brian Slagel at Eldorado Studios in LA on tracks to be used for their second album.

Slayer drummer Dave Lombardo:

Hell Awaits, man, when I look back at it, it's like, wow, they really liked my drumming, 'cause they turned up the drums a lot on that record. The drums were very prominent, especially the toms.

October 1984

October 1984. Gord Kirchin quickly becomes the notoriously over-the-top Piledriver, in Toronto, Canada and finds himself growling away on his debut album, called *Metal Inquisition*.



Piledriver vocalist Gord Kirchin:

I was on tour with my bar band, UN, and I got a phone call from a former band member Leslie Howe, "Hey, do you want to do the vocals on a heavy metal album?" I went, "Fuck yeah!" I was 23 years old and chompin' at the bit. I was into metal myself, but at the time, living in Ottawa, there was no place for you to play all original metal. You could not get booked unless you played covers. Vocally, I was metal, so while we played the Top 40, we spiced it up with radio things from Judas Priest and AC/DC and Van Halen and got booked a lot. I remember it like yesterday. We were touring the Maritimes, in Gander, Nfld., in the hotel room soldering some fresh parts into the tired old mixing board when I got "The Call" from Leslie. I can still

smell the solder (laughs). I was instantly hooked. I was gonna be on vinyl, *in stores*! With original *metal*! No more covers for this boy!

So, here's how contrived it all was. Leslie Howe is Mr. Commercial Pop, knew nothing about real metal except for Zeppelin, Sabbath, Purple and maybe Def Leppard, AC/DC and radio Judas Priest. Les was in dealings with this record weasel Zoran Busic for a commercial pop release of Les and Louise Renny's *One 2 One* album, or something like it. At some point during the process, the record weasel tells Les that when he puts out an album with a wildly "metal" artwork on the front, it easily sells 20,000 copies no matter what complete garbage is on the vinyl. They laugh and say that Les should do up some of this "trash metal" and they'd make a few grand off a quickie album.

And so they did. Since Les' ears had never been tainted by "true" metal, let alone anything thrashy, the record weasel clued him in by giving him Venom's *At War with Satan* and *Welcome to Hell* and Slayer *Show No Mercy*, amongst others. The reference points focused on were Hell and Satan, sex and booze, metal and death. Damned if he didn't do it—and well—the bastard! (laughs). Les, knowing I was the most metal voice he had worked with, called on me to bring this material to demented life on tape. Nailed it! (laughs).

I had all kinds of shit working itself out in my head. We were gonna be the new shock rock band, the Canadian Alice Mentors! Or was it Canuck El Cooper? This was either a killer album completely by accident, or it was all guided by the leathered hands of the Gods of Metal into being, because it *needed* to be channeled into existence for the greater good of metaldom, and man oh man, were we gonna be huge! (laughs). In my head I had all kinds of props that we were going to use to illustrate each song onstage. Even Alice would be jealous.

But it never happened. When I arrived in Toronto to get the Pileball rollin', I found out the record weasel didn't want to put a single penny more into his quickie scheme. He refused to give any support to a Piledriver band, let alone a tour for said band, let alone production costs for any of it at all. I was basically a broke kid in a strange city, with nothing but a bass and amp, a microphone, a boombox and some clothes. When I wanted royalties from our runaway accidental hit album to float me until I found a place and a job, he pointed out that my contract—a document ironically "there to protect me" on the day I signed—boasted in deep, deep legalese that I was actually no more than a vocal plumber/electrician/landscaper, a work for hire, a subcontracted service, not entitled to any further compensation beyond the $250 that I got when done the vocal sessions. For all intents and purposes, the live band was forbidden to be for me, as was any financial involvement for me.

Then, salt on the wound, I was in shock when I saw the front cover. Yup, he did go and make a costume based on the character I drew at the contract signing meeting at the Novotel Hotel. I couldn't believe how cheap it all looked, and it crushed me that the person in the outfit on the cover wasn't even me! He was so cheap he wouldn't even bring me to Toronto for the photo shoot: "With the mask, no one will notice." Gee, thanks. But still, I ended up doing so much press, so many radio interviews, so many phoners, and having so much demented fun fleshing out the Piley character, I started thinking, okay, I can really get behind this. I can get right into this. This is so me. So what if he doesn't want to support it. I'm gonna do it anyway.

No one around me in Ottawa understood this music, so I tried putting a band together in Montreal, but too many egos wouldn't succumb to stage names and costumery on top of lack of any label support. So, not having any luck in Montreal, I moved to Toronto to try to find some like-minded theatrical thrashers, plus a job so I could support it all.

Several years passed in Toronto trying to get a band together and never quite nailing a roster, always short a guy. The closest I came to achieving live Piledriver back then was the time Dogs with Jobs opened for Razor at the Opera House and Dave Carlo goaded me into playing "Sex with Satan," which I gladly did, as one does not *not* play a Dave Carlo request. Bad things could happen (laughs). In the end I was the only one involved in Piledriver that cared a whit about the fans or the music. It was sick. Les and the weasel only cared about the money in their pockets. True weasels, they thought, "Fuck those metal idiots, we're getting' paid."

Yeah, well, kids were sending in money for T-shirts and that greasy lowlife record weasel would cash their cheques and not ship them out anything. For years and years now I still hear from disgruntled fans who never got their goods. All the fan mail that was coming in during those crucial years, '85 and '86, he would go through them to look for T-shirt orders and then throw the rest in the garbage. I didn't see anything until '87 when I was at his office begging for change, and he tossed a box of fan mail to me instead of in the garbage. All the letters were like lace doilies; they had the addresses and t-shirt requests cut out of the pages like he was pasting together psycho ransom notes. I could only respond to those that didn't ask about merch in their letters because those were the only ones whose names and addresses remained uncut.

At least there was a killer album involved in all that bullshit (laughs). Looking at the songs, "Metal Inquisition," that's the anthem. That's the rallying cry. Whip 'em all up and rope 'em all in, stompin'

on posers as we ride. The title pretty much sums it up. It takes a pounding poke at pretty-boy posers and that always helps get the metaloids on your side.

"Sex with Satan" was the ultimate "Metal loves Satan" statement. Not that we religiously loved Satan or hail Satan and all that, it's just the simultaneous lusting for and fearing of Satan's all-powerful demon dick. We'd let him fuck us raw so that we feel so sinfully naughty and have something good to confess to on Sundays. We will bend over willingly and take his red-hot member because we love and fear it so. We don't care if it throws us out of the church, we don't care about excommunication. We just obsess about Satan's massive dick. This is why it's the most popular song, the one I get the most mail about. That's the identifying song of the Pile-public at large. This is their illicit lullaby.

"Sodomize the Dead," that's the one with the deepest lyrics. You saw the way I typed them out in the liner notes (ahem, which never got printed, due to weasel cheapness): "Scream, scream, scream, scream some more." I think there's a part in there actually where there's a real half-puke; that was fun. "Witch Hunt" is a real popular song. The mindset there was that that was supposed to be our ZZ Top ballad with that big open riff. That was the big commercial venture of the album.

"Pile Driver," that one is just silly. It was in vogue for a while to have a song as your band name. That was basically the exposé, introducing the character of Pile Driver to everybody. Sort of get inside him and what he's about. "Human Sacrifice" is simply an homage to the most epic "morning after" one ever survived, again. And last but certainly not least is "Alien Rape", my favourite Piledriver song. Like "Witch Hunt" it's another mind-movie, soundscape, theatre-of-the-mind, but this time occupying the sci-fi realm. It's so massive.

October 1984. Swedish mystery band Bathory issue their self-titled debut, which can qualify as early thrash metal, death metal or black metal.

Bathory vocalist and guitarist Quorthon:

The number of fan mail in response to the two tracks on the *Scandinavian Metal Attack* compilation we did in January 1984 was endless. The record

company asked us to write material for a full-length album. But there was no line-up. Nobody had ever even thought about the band as something serious. We had no ambitions to make records or make a name for ourselves at all. We just wanted to have fun in the rehearsal place and play for the sake of making noise.

In order to record that first album, I asked a couple of friends of mine to help me out. They were Oi! punkers and easily adapted to the style. After all, Bathory's origin is a mixture of early Black Sabbath, early Motörhead and early GBH. We spent just 56 hours recording the first album. We were happy to have made an album. We were shit kids that had just come out of school. I could never even have dreamed of what would come out of this debut.

October – November 1984. Megadeth struggle through a few shows as a three-piece.

October 8 – 15, 1984. Fresh off their identity as Hellhammer, Celtic Frost's Tom Warrior and Martin Eric Ain work with a session drummer on material for their first album.

Tom G. Warrior on the Celtic Frost legacy:
It's because we were one of the few, at that time, in terms of heavy metal bands that weren't afraid to branch out. What we did I don't think was very unconventional, but it was to the rest of the scene. We were essentially not just metalheads, we were music lovers. We came from violently varied musical fields. Reed was a trained jazz and classical drummer, Martin was a new wave addict. What connected us was that we all really loved heavy metal. But because we had so much variety in our background, we didn't see anything wrong with combining these backgrounds with our heavy metal. So what to us was normal, to the rest of the scene, it was perceived as unbelievably unusual. Because at that time a word like jazz or new wave was almost like a curse word in metal circles. And we didn't think like that. So we combined all these things and thereby created a new sound.

October 22, 1984. After dipping their collective hoofs into Oregon and Washington, Slayer embark on their first significant trip away from home, playing Winnipeg, Canada.

Late 1984. Nuclear Assault play their first gig, at the Union Jack in South River, New Jersey.

Late 1984. Raven issue their excellent double live album, *Live at the Inferno*. After this, the band begin their major label deal with Atlantic Records.

Late 1984. The infamous Barry Kobrin, having had success with his import business Important Records, forms Relativity and Combat Records. Combat would sign both Exodus and Megadeth, and later Possessed and Death, with some of the earliest signings being TKO, Oz and The Rods.

November 1984

November 1984. Celtic Frost issue their incendiary six-track *Morbid Tales* EP.

> Tom Warrior on *Morbid Tales*:
> We needed to see if our band could be established in the scene. Nobody knew at the time. The budget for Morbid Tales was unbelievably small. We had six days to record and mix the album, and in spite of what we felt, the album had a very good sound. We struggled, later, for years, to actually achieve that sound again. It's a key album because it managed to launch Frost on its career. It managed to build a basis upon which later we could experiment.

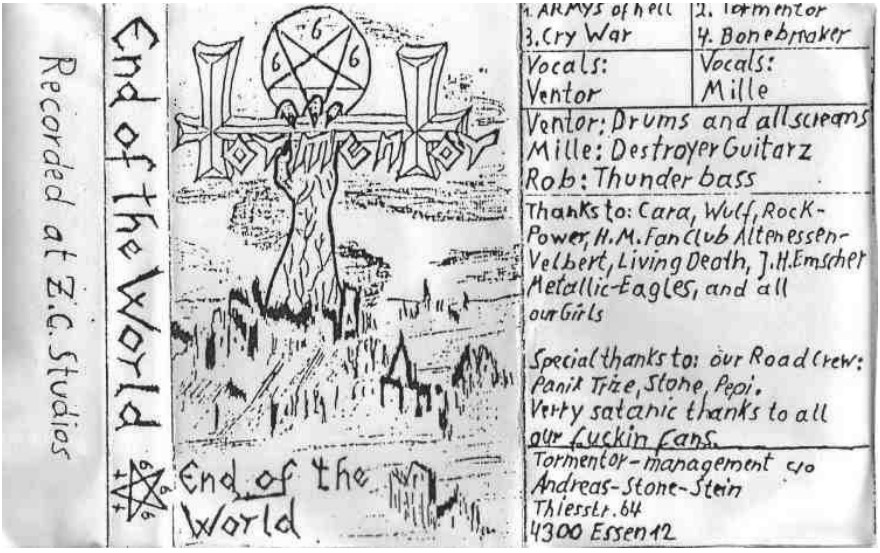
November 1984. Megadeth sign to New York's notorious Combat Records.

> Megadeth bassist Dave Ellefson:
> Certainly, Metallica was the first horse through to the photo finish for sure. But what happened with that is that all of a sudden, the industry started looking around going, wow, there's something here.

And so with us, with Metallica getting signed first to Megaforce… and of course Brian Slagel was already in the game and was putting out his *Metal Massacre* records, and that really stirred the waters to some degree—that's of course Slayer, Metallica, Armored Saint.

So to a large degree, he was the West Coast guy doing that and I kind of viewed Jonny Z as the East Coast guy doing that. He was helping foster Anthrax, first signed Metallica. But again, first one in the water, and all of a sudden, everybody else wants to jump in. I guess that's how I look at it. So Metallica helped us all first get our own indie deals. Ours was with Combat, Anthrax with Megaforce, Slayer moving forward with Metal Blade.

November 1, 1984. Kreator, still at this point known as Tormentor, issue their second demo, *End of the World*, consisting of "Armies of Hell," "Tormentor," "Cry War" and "Bonebreaker." It's very much like Venom and addresses a number of speeds, but much of it is fast.


Recorded at Z.C. Studios
End of the World
End of the World
1. ARMYS of hell
2. Tormentor
3. Cry War
4. Bonebreaker
Vocals: Ventor
Vocals: Mille
Ventor: Drums and all screams
Mille: Destroyer Guitarz
Rob: Thunder bass
Thanks to: Cara, Wulf, Rock-Power, H.M. Fanclub Altenessen-Velbert, Living Death, J.H.Emscher Metallic-Eagles, and all our Girls
Special thanks to: our Road Crew: Panik Trixe, Stone, Pepi.
Verry satanic thanks to all our fuckin fans.
Tormentor-management c/o Andreas-Stone-Stein Thiesstr. 64 4300 Essen 12

Xavier Russell on Germany's thrash towns:
There are about three areas. There's Bochum, where Kreator's from, really industrial town, Frankfurt, where they all drink their apple cider, and Hamburg, where Helloween is from. And Berlin, which is where Noise Records made all those bands. Those are the main areas. In southern Germany, they're more into Scorpions and stuff like that down there. Any really industrial town, or any town, like Berlin, they like punk and they like metal, because of when the whole Wall business came down. And Noise Records is based there and they had loads of thrash bands on the label. So it's a bit like a hotbed, really.

November 10, 1984. Destruction issue their debut EP, *Sentence of Death*, consisting of "Total Desaster," "Black Mass," "Mad Butcher," "Satan's Vengeance" and "Devil's Soldiers."

Destruction vocalist and bassist Schmier:
Back in the day people just weren't able to produce thrash metal, so our old albums don't sound that good. We had shitty producers, so for me as a musician they're not very satisfying to listen to. With *Sentence of Death*, we went from a no name to getting our record deal. The record scene was very strange at the time. This was too extreme for a lot of people. For me it is one of the most important albums for Destruction because it was our big step into the metal scene.

November 16, 1984. Elektra Records, kicking off their new deal with Metallica, reissue *Ride the Lightning*.

November 16, 1984. Slayer issue a seven-track live EP called *Live Undead*.

Slayer drummer Dave Lombardo:
Live Undead was fun. That was kind of funny because it really wasn't live. It was live but in the studio with a bunch of kids that won tickets at a radio station and that was kind of fun.

Slayer guitarist Jeff Hanneman on *Live Undead*:
That was a joke (laughs). Our record label at that time was independent, that whole Metal Blade thing, so they didn't have any money to set up to record live properly. So for whatever reason, he thought it was easier and cheaper go to a studio and bring in a bunch of kids; I guess it was a bunch of contest winners. So we just ended up playing live in his studio (laughs). So it was kind of a joke.

Metal Blade Records founder Brian Slagel on why Slayer didn't move to the Bay Area:
By the time Slayer came out it was a little bit later and there was more of a true metal scene. By that point you had all these bands—Savage Grace, Malice, Omen, Cirith Ungol, Bitch—you had this

whole segment of bands that were playing heavier music away from the Motley, Ratt situations.

Slayer came up a bit later and they were mostly based in Orange County. They played some shows up there, they had some fan base up there and certainly that punk influence came in. Also, when they were going to San Francisco, they would have huge shows, these amazing Exodus and Slayer shows up there that were way more intense than anything you would see here.

But they kept getting bigger and bigger here, too. By the time *Hell Awaits* came out, they were headlining two shows at the Country Club and the scene was getting big for bands like Armored Saint and Slayer. So there was more of a scene here, where Metallica was a little earlier and they never really felt part of that scene. LA and Frisco had two identities. San Francisco had two identities anyway in the beginning, because when Metallica first played there, I booked a Metal Massacre show. There was Bitch, Metallica, and it was supposed to be Cirith Ungol, but they dropped out, so this other terrible band named Hans Naughty played. And Hans Naughty was more like what you'd see in LA, and I think those kids turned their backs to them or something—it was awful.

And then Metallica came on, and it was like, ding, everybody freaked out. The San Francisco scene was much… it also goes to the constant rivalry. Los Angeles and San Francisco hate each other. Just the natural rivalry of these two cities. So anything in San Francisco has to be better than what we do here; it has to be different. So that played a lot of what happened up in San Francisco, too. We're not going to have that scene you have in LA. We're going to create our own scene, and when that scene started to happen with thrash, it flourished because, "It's ours, and it's not what you guys have there." There's a lot of that in play in how the whole scheme of things worked out.

November 16 – December 20, 1984. Metallica embark on the European Bang that Head that Doesn't Bang Tour, with Tank as support.

November 23, 1984. Music for Nations issues Metallica's *Creeping Death* EP. Brian Tatler is promptly sent a copy and is pleased to see a cover of his band's "Am I Evil?" as the b-side. The 12" single also includes a cover of Blitzkrieg's "Blitzkrieg."

Metallica guitarist Kirk Hammett on his credit and contribution to "Creeping Death:"

My memory of stuff like this is fuzzy, because I kind of see it all as just songs with just a group of riffs, and then our name on the top. So

I have to really think about this kind of thing. But "Creeping Death," that whole "Die!" part is an old Exodus riff that I wrote when I was like 16 or 17, maybe even 15 years old, when I was a teenager. But when I wrote that, I was just like, oh my God, that's almost my "Black Sabbath."

Diamond Head vocalist Sean Harris:
I think Metallica's version of our songs—and I have not heard them all—are more full-on, but I still believe the Diamond Head originals had more about them. More depth and tension. I remember, I think found out about it when their manager Peter Mensch phoned my up asking for some lyrics. I knew they had done "Am I Evil?" before but for "The Prince," only I knew the lyrics. They weren't quite sure of the words. I thought they had bloody cheek. What are these Americans doing playing our stuff? That shows my old arrogance. You have to remember that back then we thought we were on the way to superstardom and nothing could stop us. We were also extremely naive. I think I even didn't know bands were allowed to play another band's songs! Later we played "Am I Evil?" a couple of times live with them which was a blast.

Blitzkrieg vocalist Brian Ross:
Lars phoned me up about six months before the record came out asking if I minded them doing it. He also wanted to check on the lyrics too so I had to relay them all to him down the phone there and then. It did no good though because they still got them wrong! Their version was interesting. I thought musically they had stuck very, very close to ours but obviously the vocals were completely different. Actually, in a strange twist of fate, they inspired us because after hearing Metallica's version we changed the ending of ours so it was more like theirs! They put all these accents on the end that we adopted—but we left off the belch!

Diamond Head guitarist Brian Tatler on "Am I Evil?:"

I think it's a good song, it's good, well-written if I say so myself, I think the arrangement is good, and it goes to a lot of dynamics. Dynamics are hard to get into songs, and that's got a lot of dynamics. It goes from the moody intro and then goes into the widdly widdly bit. It's a great riff for the main chunk of the song, and then it goes into a fast section, and then there's a big guitar solo, tapping, and so it kind of takes you on a roller coaster ride of emotions, really, that song. Seven minutes 40 seconds long, and people just must've thought, how can this young band, 19, 20 years old, write this epic song?

And if they can write this epic song, there must be more that they could do in the future. There's a lot of potential, probably, in a song like that, and a song like "The Prince." So that's the best answer, I think I can give for that. "It's Electric" is one of Lars' favourites as well, isn't it? All fast songs, all pretty much energy songs and he really focused on arrangement. I mean, he was a big fan of Motörhead, but they don't sound like Motörhead, very often, do they?

December 1984

December 1984. Overkill's first release is a self-titled EP on Azra/ Metal Storm.

Bobby "Blitz" Ellsworth on the "good ol' days:"

You know what? I don't know if I miss anything about them. Maybe the fact that it was new and uncharted. Everything was kind of a new experience. A lot of people say, "Ah, those where the good ol' days!" I say, "Damn! These are pretty good days too!" (laughs). These are not shit days where you're trying to play in somebody's basement to get a gig. Because if that was happening, I wouldn't be doing it. I mean the '90s were a little lean, you know? But it was still something we loved doing. Definitely, the fun part about the heyday of thrash is that it there were no rules.

So, "What do you miss in the heyday?"—it was chaos. We were kids making our bones. I always like to say when I see old pictures of us, "Hey, I didn't even have hairs on my balls yet!" (laughs). The idea is that we were all going through the same things together. We were all growing up in a world where we didn't even know we could grow up in.

The missing of Rat Skates… that was the instantaneous bond when there is four of you who don't know what the fuck you are doing, but you're just doing it anyway. You are compelled to do it. You don't know why, but it feels good, so you're going to do it. When I think of him with regard to this, it was a great bond. This wasn't a business test back then. Now, it's a "love of" and a "business." Back then it was just chaos. That was the reason. Kids running around the country trying to stay out of jail (laughs).

December 1984 – January 1985. Megadeth record, on and off, what will become their debut album, working at Indigo Ranch Studios in Malibu, California.

Megadeth guitarist Chris Poland on Megadeth on the band's early sound:

It was basically not really anything that had been done yet. So we were trying to just make it be what it was. Dave would come up with the parts and actually everybody would actually put their two cents in here or there, a harmony here, cut this part out there. We didn't have a big budget; we really didn't have our shit together for that record. But the performance and the playing on it is still the same performance and playing.

Business-wise, we had a partnership. We split everything four ways, except the publishing. Originally, we had talked about splitting everything, even publishing, and Dave's attorney got him alone, and before we knew it, that's not what happened. And that's his business. That's his attorney's job, and I have no sour grapes about that. But again, basically, we had a partnership, that everybody got everything, and it was all four ways. We were all taken care of, our rent was paid, and it wasn't a terrible thing.

It's just that we didn't have the same vision as Dave did. Especially me. I mean Dave Ellefson had Dave's vision. He wanted to do whatever Dave was doing. Me and Gar, I can't speak for Gar right now, but toward the end there, it was just like being totally alcoholic drug addicts, that couldn't lend any kind of sanity to any situation. There was no clear thinking on anyone's part. I look back at it now and it's a miracle we're not all dead. But, I think that's another thing that made those records what they are. I mean, we were as angry as that music sounds.

December 28, 29, 1984. Slayer play their first shows with Megadeth, however they take place across the country, at L'Amour, in New York.

1985 — "I'm maybe jealous of the royalty checks"

One might consider 1985 to be the year of catch-up to Metallica of all the other significant thrash acts along with a phalanx of second generation bands making their first endearing and tentative steps into what is a hive of activity.

Representing a strong second wave, Razor debuts with both their *Armed and Dangerous* EP and their *Executioner's Song* debut full-length, while the UK suggests its first solid thrash band in Onslaught, who debut with *Power from Hell*. Over on the mainland, the Teutonic is represented by Destruction's *Eternal Devastation* and Kreator's *Endless Pain*, while Celtic Frost issues another EP and then their *To Mega Therion* full-length questioning of all convention.

Back in the states, Dark Angel, Possessed and East Coast representers Overkill bring their first records, while Canada's Exciter and Voivod both deliver new albums, the latter band representing the home team at the landmark World War III thrash throw-down in Montreal in November of 1985.

Up the ladder of importance, Slayer shape their sound further with their second album *Hell Awaits*. We should care more perhaps, but the first record and the initial idea of Slayer in general was such a shock, and then the third record, out the following year, such a classic, that *Hell Awaits* gets lost in the advancing timeline of terror.

A similar situation befalls Exodus, who in 1985 finally deliver a record in *Bonded by Blood*. As much as the album is heralded today as a thrash building block and a classic and all of that, apart from its first few months of life, the album just seemed anti-climactic through the balance of the '80s, Exodus subtly passed by in bisecting lines of bad timings. Yes, the album matters, but that fact is, Exodus is not one of The Big Four.

There's a taint as well upon Megadeth's debut (and is it a coincidence that they, like Exodus, were also a Combat Records band?), and that comes from the fact that the album is a bit crude and wobbly—*Killing* is no *Ride the Lightning*, that is for sure. Nonetheless, one would be crazy to deny that first records from Exodus and Megadeth are huge thrash stories of 1985.

But if one was to net it out, in terms of a singular thrash story, 1985 is the year of Anthrax, who bring on their classic lineup lead singer in Joey Belladonna, put out a fetching EP in *Armed and Dangerous*, slide in a

legendary alter-ego record in S.O.D.'s *Speak English or Die*, and then up into October, slam into thrash consciousness permanently with the landmark *Spreading the Disease* album. Not only do Anthrax help push thrash as a commercial proposition by signing to a (minor) major in Island Records and then sell lots of records, but the album is a forceful and slamming good time, creatively provocative as well through its clean and old school metal vocals. Like Metallica, Anthrax is busy making thrash respectable, keeping the shark moving forward through the water as we approach even greater strides in the year and years that follow.

1985. Perennial Bay Area locals Laaz Rockit issue their second album, *No Stranger to Danger*, once more, on indie Target Entertainment.

1985. Dusseldorf, Germany's Warrant issue their lone full-length, *The Enforcer*, followed by the five-track *First Strike* EP the same year.

1985. Exhorder form, under the name Sabotage.

1985. Raven follow up their classic *All for One* album (plus an impressive double live album, also for Jonny and Megaforce), with *Stay Hard*, issued by major label Atlantic Records. The band continue to move their sound away from speed metal, adding as well a disconcerting commercialism.

> Megaforce Records founder Jonny Zazula on Raven signing to a major: Basically, with Raven, Doug Morris, who was the head of Atlantic Records in those days, Doug wanted me to bring him a band. He knew that Metallica was just taken, and all the hoopla that was going on with them, so he figured, let's get a band from Jonny. So basically Raven were the band that they chose, for Atlantic.

Raven vocalist and bassist John Gallagher:

What happened was the plan was to come to the States and tour until we got a real deal and a real agency. And the culmination of the tour we did in '84 was a show at the Roseland in New York City, and there are pictures of that on the back of *Live at the Inferno*. And that was us, Anthrax and Metallica, Anthrax opening, and then Metallica in the middle, then us. Basically, we all got our deals from that one show. And the guy who signed us was really a dance guy, like a disco guy, and he wasn't really an A&R guy. But he really liked us and got us our deal with Atlantic.

You know, when you listen to *Stay Hard*, other than the sound not being quite as bombastic, there's not really that much of a difference between *All for One* and *Stay Hard*, one or two songs. They wanted to do a retake of "Hard Ride." That was just the company flexing its muscle, and we said, "Yeah, yeah, whatever." It was a complete waste of time, but what are you gonna do? (laughs).

1985. Belgian thrashers Crossfire issue their second album, *Second Attack*, on Mausoleum Records.

1985. Sacred Reich form, in Phoenix, Arizona.

1985. Hawaii issue their second and last album, *The Natives Are Restless*.

1985. Exhorder form in New Orleans, LA. Some consider them an unsung thrash influence, or more specifically, one of the few precursors to the neo-thrash sound Pantera would make famous.

1985. Second generation Bay Area thrash legends Testament record a four-track demo.

Chuck Billy on Testament's early days:

The band started actually with Eric and Louie, when they started Legacy with Steve Souza, '83, '84, something like that. They had the band and we were watching them, they did a demo, sent it over to Europe and it just took off. They sold almost 3000, 4000 copies of this demo, and next thing you know magazines are starting to write about it, so it created a pretty good buzz, this demo.

And at that point they sent it to Megaforce Records, and Maria Ferrero over there loved it and she kept pushing it to Jonny Z and saying,

"Hey, this band, they've got a buzz, they're not even signed, we gotta get them." They had kind of a record deal but at the time Steve Souza decided he wanted to leave and join Exodus, and so Steve, who was friends with my younger brother, he came by the house and said, "Hey, I'm leaving the band, here's Alex Skolnik's phone number, give him a call and go audition; you should audition for this band. They need a singer."

I had noticed right around when Eric and Louie started in 1983, so '83, '84, '85, when I was watching them, that's when there were a lot more bands coming up, like Slayer and Suicidal Tendencies from LA and then S.O.D. and stuff like that. So there was just this different thing, then, growing up. When the glam scene left, the metal scene grew. I don't think anybody wanted to put on the outfits, the tights and the makeup, probably the hairspray first and foremost. I don't know, metal music is the energy of the guitars and the riffing, so that's why I liked the punk thing. But the glam thing didn't have any of that energy or oomph or kick-you-in-the-nuts kind of stuff. So we really clashed heads; Paul Baloff with his "kill posers," that was kind of the theme of it. So when there was a glam show and metalheads showed up, there were going to be problems.

A lot of the club owners were just really cool people themselves. They let us get away with murder. As youngsters at Ruthie's Inn, I remember going there and you never really had to have money in your pocket because half the time you're reaching over the counter stealing bottles of alcohol, and underage probably. So it's like, man, this is the place I'm coming every Friday and Saturday night, underage to have a good time. So there were club owners like that. The people who owned the Stone, and they owned the Keystone Palo Alto, those brothers, the Corona brothers, they were great guys as well. So a lot of the club owners just had a lot to do with it, and they were really into the scene, and really into letting that kind of aggressive attitude come into their establishments and do their thing—they were a part of it.

In the San Francisco Bay Area, music's just the culture. The Dead, Starship… there's history. There was a scene, there was a movement, and it's still there. But I think for all the bands that came through as metal bands, Metallica were the ones who were doing something special for us and something different. It was new; their attitude was like the punk thing, not really caring about radio or video. I wanted to be on that team, you know. So that's who we had to start, and fortunately for the Bay Area, all these bands—Death Angel, Exodus, Forbidden, Violence—didn't just copy Metallica; everybody had their own identity.

If you really think back, all those bands didn't just sound like one thing, they all had their own identities, which was like the beauty of the thrash scene. Like you talk grunge or something in Seattle, you kind of know what you're going to get, kind of by what everybody

else did. So that was something special. And the fans, they'd come out from all the way down the South Bay to the North Bay and they'd all come together.

And for me, once I decided I was going to become the vocalist, I went to school and did the whole vocal training and the private lessons and all that stuff, and got to the point where I'm like, okay, I should probably go find a band. I'm going to stop jamming with my friends and my brother and try to go out to San Francisco and find myself a real band, or an established band, a Bay Area band that's doing something.

So I hooked up with a couple local guys that were in some upcoming bands at that time that did really well, and their singer had left, so I kind of jumped in and kind of found my way into this band, and it was more a different style of music, because that was like 1981 or something. I wasn't introduced to the whole thrash thing hard yet. And me being trained as trying to carry a melody, I was always trying to be a melodic singer at that point. So once I got the job in Testament and experienced the whole Metallica and the Exodus thing and kind of learned that, Eric really was a big part of training me to do what I do as a vocalist. Because when I came in, the first record was already written, so I had to kind of learn the songs and record them.

So I had to learn Steve Souza's style, that style. Eric really helped me along with that. So I kind of had a crash course in metal doing our first record and once I got that, I really picked it up. But the one thing I always wanted to try to bring for my part of it, it was a little melody, to be melodic and have a hook, something. So that's what I was always trying to combine, because Eric was always trying to sing on the beat, you know; all the vocals had to sing like that, and I was like, "How do I sing like that? Well put a melody on it." So I finally figured it out over the years writing together with Eric, and here we are.

Eric and Alex are different. Alex was training with Joe Satriani when he joined the band, so he had the arpeggios and that crazy stuff going on. Eric came from a different background where he was more into Venom, Slayer, Mercyful Fate; he came to that heavier rhythm side. And then they found each other, and Eric would come with these crazy guitar runs, and then Alex would harmonize them crazy, and they found this uniqueness to them, that they started doing early on when I came into the band, on songs like "The Haunting," which is like a crazy running guitar riff for a 15-year-old kid to come up with. So that blew me away. So yes, Alex did bring this whole other shredding guitar virtuoso thing to our music.

Testament guitarist Alex Skolnick:

When I got the word that Testament, which was then called Legacy, was looking for a guitar player, I wasn't sure if it made sense, but I thought I'll give it a try, and see if I could add a more schooled

guitar playing to this kind of music, which was very unschooled and kind of punk-influenced at the time. And it made sense and it's interesting, because now it seems like if you play heavy music, you're expected to be good on guitar, and drums. But when I started that wasn't the case. It still had this garage band quality.

But I'm happy that guys like us, we're credited with helping change that. There were a bunch of other guys who did it as well. So I was a little reluctant about it at first, but it was definitely the right move because I think if I'd joined a more commercial rock band, I don't think it would have been as interesting.

Metallica was one new band I'd discovered. They had just done their first album, *Kill 'em All*, and I discovered Motörhead. And Slayer, the first time they played in the Bay Area, I liked a lot of that stuff, but only Accept seemed to have guitar playing that was kind of polished and more influenced by Van Halen and Randy Rhoads. So I wasn't sure what kind of music I wanted to play. At the time I was studying guitar with Joe Satriani, and I was really into Van Halen and Randy Rhoads and Warren DiMartini of Ratt. Not that I wanted to play that kind of music, but I liked that guitar playing. And George Lynch and Yngwie Malmsteen as well— he had just come out at the time. But if you were that kind of guitar player, you joined a commercial rock band. You needed to find a Y&T or something like that.

1985. Metal Blade Records issues the *Metal Massacre VI* compilation, which includes songs by Possessed, Hirax and Dark Angel.

Metal Blade Records founder Brian Slagel on the social conditions that helped birth thrash:

Back in the early '80s the economy was terrible, a lot of problems, so people within the country anywhere were kind of tense and angry, especially kids coming up because they didn't have it as good as their parents did. So there's a lot of this anger out there on a society level, too. So that just made it ripe for some really aggressive music to come in so these kids could get their energy out.

People ask why do kids like heavy metal? Kids are angry. They need aggression, they have a lot of energy, and this is a safe way to get it out, through music. I always say if you look at the history of the times when heavy metal has been big, there's always been a Republican president. In the '80s it was Reagan, and then the late '80s you had Bush. That was when metal was huge.

And then it kind of went away in the Clinton years and came back in the second Bush years. So it's kind of funny when you look at it. I think that sets up people wanting to be involved in aggressive music. Because there was the sense of anger in the economy and the struggles people had. Plus the gas crisis had happened not long before that. So many things had to set up for that to happen, and naturally kids want to gravitate towards something that's aggressive. And the more extreme you can be, the more people are going to be into it.

Plus it was absolutely working class music. It was all people barely above and below the poverty line. And the bands were like that, too. The bands back then had no… you look at the Metallica stories—nobody had any money back then. So it's totally working class, people that didn't think they had a chance, that needed to get their aggressions out and here was a music that worked.

1985. Atomkraft issue their lone full-length album, *Future Warriors*, on Neat Records. Neat during this era, had moved on from bands with a NWOBHM sound to rougher, speedier fare like Atomkraft.

AT THE TOP OF YOUR HEAVY METAL LIST
NEAT 1028
NEAT 1026
NEAT 1022
RELEASE DATE
6th SEPTEMBER
NIGHTMARE
NEAT 47 - NEAT 47-12
NIGHTMARE c/w SATANACHIST
(F.O.A.D.) EXTRA TRACK ON 12"
VINYL HISTORY IN THE MAKING
To follow shaped disc — Neat S47 Picture 12" — Neat P47
Cassette Single — Neat C47 includes interview.
COMING SOON:-
THE VENOM VIDEO EP — INCLUDING 'NIGHTMARE' ON POLYGRAM, CAT NO: 0412782
NEW CATALOGUE
DEALERS — RING US NOW ON (091) 2624999 FOR FULL RELEASE CATALOGUE AND FREE ISSUE II OF 'LEAD WEIGHT' MAGAZINE FOR YOUR COUNTER.
SUCCESSFULLY DISTRIBUTED BY PINNACLE (0689) 73144

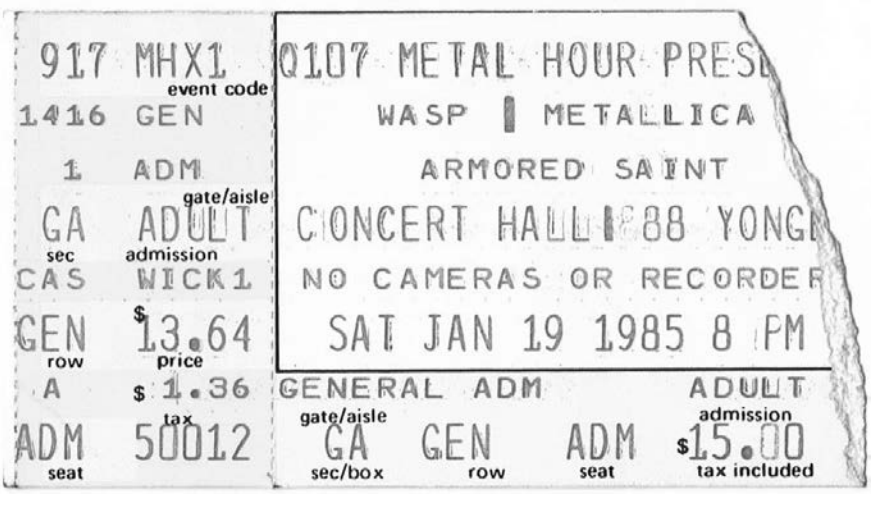
Atomkraft vocalist and bassist Tony Dolan:
We were born out of the nuclear years, with a lot of anti-nuclear lobbying going on. It was anti-nuclear this and anti-cold war that, everything. So that's where we made our statement, as young guys with a voice going this is where we're going to blow ourselves up, if we're not fucking careful. So that was the whole Atomkraft thing, like this big red button. Again it was synonymous with just life as well, but when we came back from the Polish tour the band sort of fell apart.

January 1985

January 1985. Vio-lence form, first as a three-piece, and begin playing shows around the Bay Area.

January 10 – March 19, 1985. Metallica's North American tour in support of *Ride the Lightning* finds the band supporting W.A.S.P. The bands did not get along.

January 20, 1985. Ronald Reagan is sworn in for a second term as US President, giving thrash bands much to complain about, usually around the topics of the cold war, the very real possibility of nuclear war, environmental issues and an economy tough on the lower and middle classes.



Exodus guitarist Gary Holt:
I don't know, it seems thrash metal thrives during Republican administrations. I don't know why. Two-fifths of this band are die-hard conservatives, and me, I'm kind of an extremist liberal. I don't know, I think it's probably more coincidence than anything. Just the time the music was already coming out. I don't want to give Reagan credit for anything, other than bad movies. Just lyrically sometimes, with stuff like "Chemi-kill" and other pro-environment, anti-toxic polluting songs. Musically it was always about the riff. Politics never came into the picture musically—it's always been a riff-based form, genre. It wasn't built on three chords and a chorus; it was built on a thousand riffs played as aggressively as possible.

Metal Blade Records founder Brian Slagel on thrash lyrics:

Definitely there was a lot of political stuff. I think that was another reason why that music was so successful back then, because there was a lot of angst and political unrest. So that stuff definitely crept in a lot. And horror and fantasy were a big driving force. Slayer, for example, all those horror and Satanic and fantasy lyrics, that was all borrowed from the traditional metal of the '70s—Priest, Sabbath, then Maiden in the early '80s.

There was definitely a punk influence in there too. So you had some of that real political, social commentary stuff in the lyrics. It was one or the other—you pretty much had Exodus *Bonded by Blood*, violent, graphic, horror fantasy lyrics, or you had the political lyrics. But it was always saying something interesting; it wasn't just throwing something out there to throw out there. A lot of people had really interesting takes on things.

And as these bands get bigger, they see the world and have these other influences and are in a different mindset economically. You're going to look at different things and the stuff you talk about it going to be more intense. Certainly as the '80s and the Reagan era wore on, with all the problems in the economy, certainly Metallica was one of the big ones, with *…And Justice for All* and even "Master of Puppets," which is a song about the evil of drugs. It ran the gamut but was always dark and serious—that was important. The image and the lyrics were always very dark and serious, and the music was serious as well, and extreme. You've got an extreme form of music so you've got to have these extreme lyrics.

February 1985. Exciter work at Brittania Row Studios in London, UK on tracks that will comprise their third album, *Long Live the Loud*.

Exciter guitarist John Ricci:

So then Music for Nations, they wanted to bring us to London, England to record the next album, which was *Long Live the Loud*. So we flew to London and we got booked at Britannia Row Studios, which is owned and operated by Pink Floyd. So Nick Mason, the drummer, he was the guy that was on the premises. And we had Guy Bidmead, one-time Motörhead producer, produced *Long Live the Loud*.

THERE IS ONLY ONE NIGHTCLUB WHERE METAL LIVES
L'AMOUR
1546 62ND ST. BAYHIDGE, BROOKLYN 212-232-1616
"THE ROCK CAPITOL OF BROOKLYN"
EVERY THURS THE BATTLE OF THE BANDS
THREE NEW METAL BANDS EACH WEEK
FRI NOV 9
MERCYFUL FATE w/SNEAK ATTACK
SAT NOV 10
SLAYER w/BEAST
COMING FRI NOV 16
EXCITER
WED NOV 21
WHITE LION
SAT NOV 24
WENDY O. WILLIAMS
FRI NOV 23—
HANOI ROCKS
FRI DEC 7
ROBIN TROWER
TICKETS FOR ALL SHOWS AVAILABLE AT TICKETRON, L'AMOUR BOX OFFICE, ROCK 'N' ROLL HEAVEN—CLARK, N.J., THE MUSIC FACTORY—STATEN ISLAND MALL
1984 BROOKLYN NEW YORK

But the first couple of days in the studio, the drummer for Pink Floyd, like I said, he had his office, he was always sort of looking around the corner to see what we were doing. He made us feel really uncomfortable. So I said to the guys in the band, I said, "That's it. I'm going to go up to him and say, 'Is there a problem; is something wrong?'"

So I go up to him and I say, "Nick," I said, "you've been looking around the corner and seeing what we're doing." And he told me, he said that when he was told that the studio was booked by a heavy metal band from Canada, he thought we were going to party and demolish his studio, like party and throw beer bottles and scratch the furniture. So I said, "Oh, okay." Because he had a nice pool table, pinball machine. He thought we were going to party and drink beer while we were recording. And he said to me, "I realize now that you guys are like nice, polite, laid-back guys. I have nothing to worry about." I said, "Exactly. Don't worry." I said, "We're here to do a job."

So that was it. Then we finished the record. The last day we were in the studio doing the final mix, the Music for Nations guy calls and says, "Hey, we have a tour for you, a European tour, ten shows with Accept throughout Europe. It's just Exciter and Accept, no other bands." Okay, let's go. So we finished mixing the record. The very next day we got on the Nightliner, like a tour bus, and we toured with Accept throughout Europe. The last day of the tour was at the Hammersmith in London. That was the final show. That was a really good tour. It was March 1985 and it was fantastic. The crowds were crazy.

I remember we played in Paris at this venue called Le Zenith, which is like a huge arena, but it's a tent. And they have cabaret shows in there. And I remember when our tour bus parked around the building, there was a big head of King Kong, from the movie *King Kong*, the head. Because apparently one of the cabaret shows they have, they use it as a prop. A lot of stuff like that happened. But, anyways, we played Paris and the response for us was crazy, like the crowd going crazy. I couldn't believe it. And then backstage there were like many, many, many journalists waiting for interviews, like beyond our expectations. So it was a good, good tour.

And we played with Megadeth for that album. I just talked to Dave Mustaine, because we just played in Brazil with him about a month-and-a-half ago, a metal open-air. And Dave said to me, "Yeah, man, I want to thank you for taking us on tour with you back in the 1980s." And I said, "Well, you don't have to thank us." But the tour went really well. We helped each other out a lot. We had like a big truck. We had two vehicles on the tour. So we let Megadeth put their equipment on our truck to go from city to city.

The vehicle that they were driving, there was no air conditioning and we're driving through the desert in Arizona and everything. So they'd ask us, "Can we drive with you guys?" Because we had an air-conditioned motor home. We had a good time partying and drank after the shows together and talked about life.

Oh, my God, it was so much fun. Some of the shows down in the southern US, obviously Megadeth had a bigger following than Exciter did. So what we told them, we said, "Look, we'll go on first. You guys headline. You go on second." They said, "Yeah, really?" "Yeah," I said. "These people are here to see Megadeth. They're not here to see Exciter, know what I mean? So we'll go first. You guys play second." They were very impressed with that. You gotta help. It was obvious, you know what I mean? So we did that a couple of times during the tour where we switched, even though it was an Exciter tour. We realized in some cities they had a huge, huge following. So we got along very well.

February 1985. Rare thrash band from England, Onslaught, issue their debut, *Power from Hell*.

Onslaught guitarist Nige Rockett on being tagged as the writers of the first death metal song:
Yeah, I don't know. I've still not been able to find any evidence. Sy recons it was us who used the term death metal first. But I can't find any evidence for it. Because we had it on the back of the *Power from Hell* album written on... I think it was the inner sleeve or the rear sleeve. I don't know. I knew it said somewhere "death metal." We had the death side, the metal side. The song was about swords and ancient warriors, I guess. But it was the same with Venom I guess, with the black metal thing. I mean look at black metal now compared to... I mean it was just a song and then the term obviously came into a genre of metal. You look at the difference between black metal now and Venom, with the corpsepaint and what have you, obviously. Completely a million miles away now.

Journalist Xavier Russell on why the UK lacked much of a thrash scene:

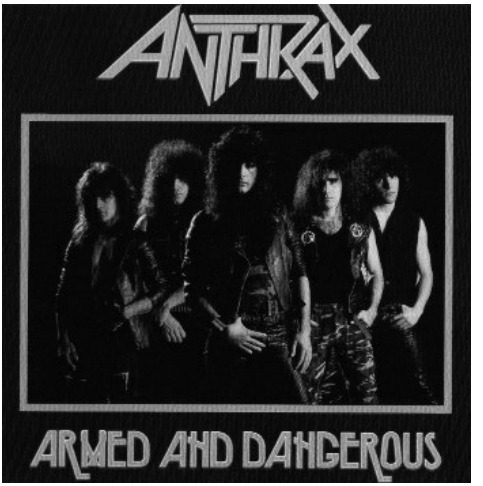
Maybe because of Iron Maiden and Saxon. Because when British heavy metal came along, there were a couple of bands, whose names escape me, but they just weren't very good, and it's like Britain really wanted to stay with these people, because Iron Maiden was popular and Saxon was popular, so bands copied those sorts of bands and they were much more traditional metal. So that's why I think the British thrash scene never got popular.

And also because bands in Germany did it much better. Bands like Destruction and Kreator… all those bands were doing it ten times better. Ask Wagner—it all goes right back to him; that turned-up music came right out of Wagner. That was more advanced than what was coming out of England. In England we had Elgar, which was lovely old... but Wagner, those roots are in their blood. Bands like Destruction and Kreator, I saw them loads of times and we never got bands like that.

They have a lot of industrial towns in Germany. We have a few in England, like Birmingham where Black Sabbath came from, and also

Slade. But in Germany, they've got loads of industrial towns. Kreator and Helloween came out of Hamburg, and Celtic Frost, they're the odd one out, because they came from Switzerland. They came from Zürich which is a business town. It's all about money. I think that's just a quirk of fate (laughs).

February 1985. Anthrax issue the *Armed and Dangerous* EP, the first release to feature vocalist Joey Belladonna, who replaces Neil Turbin.



Anthrax vocalist Joy Belladonna, on joining the band:

I saw a lot of talent. I saw a lot of hungry guys. I saw good business-minded people. They were friendly to a point. At that time, I really needed a good situation to get into to further my career. I felt that it was good, although I didn't know anything about the music. I was like frightened after I'd been doing Loverboy, Triumph and all that kind of shit. It was quite good, and I felt good about it. I felt it was difficult to sing. As far as melody goes, that was really a no-no for them. They didn't want me singing as much as possible. With that kind of music, it had to be really hard and angry, and me, my head was into really making it singable and really melodic. It didn't work with them, and with me. To the songs, I think it fit great, because I think it broke us away from a lot of groups. A lot of people were growling, and me, I was lying on top of it having a good melody, riding with those riffs. It was kind of cool.

Anthrax guitarist Dan Spitz:

Danny Lilker and Neil Turbin did the first album, but we had a lot of problems with Neil Turbin, what we call singer syndrome kinda thing. Medical issues too. Endless funny stories as well, let's say. We just replaced them with Joey and Frankie who's Charlie's nephew, just basically learning how to play bass. We just got along well with Frankie, so we figured he'd get better in time.

As far as Joey goes, we were like in the middle of a "Finlandia" winter in Ithaca, New York. It's that cold, way upstate New York—Joey lives by Canada. Me and Scott were at the studio; everybody else

went home. So me, Scott and Jonny Z, our manager and our producer, knew of Joey. He was in a band called Bible Black up there and he was like the good singer up there. But he was into Journey and all that kinda stuff; Joey's a real singer and he came in and thought he'd just sing like a Journey song in the recoding studio. And our manager, he fell off his chair like dollar signs were rolling in his eyeballs, like maybe we can adapt him to this music. And that's exactly what we did. He just fit; we just worked it out. And that to me is the real Anthrax—I won't play unless Joey's standing there.

Anthrax bassist Frank Bello on whether Metallica had inspired or influenced the band at all by this point:

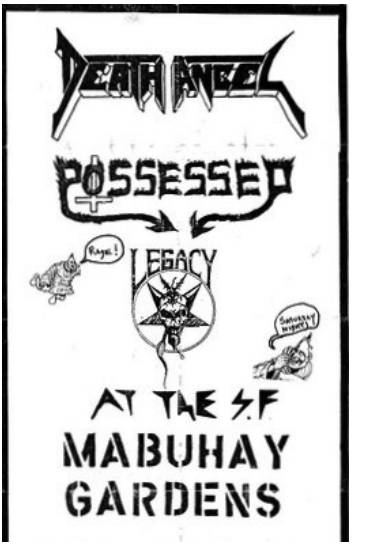
Well, Metallica, is arguably the biggest band besides AC/DC, the biggest group in the world, right? Would you say that? Yeah, so I look at Metallica in a really family-like way. First off, we've been together forever. We've been friends forever, and Metallica, in the early days, like everybody else, there was no money. There was no money. They literally stayed at… Before I was even in the band, they were in New York and they stayed at Scott's, Anthrax's rehearsal space. Even before I was in the band Anthrax. So these guys had paid their dues. So you heard it in the music. I hear it in *Kill 'em All*, you know what I mean? You hear where their drive came from. And that's why they're a big part of thrash. They opened up the doors for a lot of people, man. The whole business of this music.

And as far as inventing this music, both Mustaine and Hetfield had great riffs. And quite honestly, knowing the both of them, they're both… and this isn't the easy way out either. This is because I know both of them so well. They're both great players and they both have that knack for coming up with those amazing riffs to this day—to this day. And so I compliment the both of them.

And look, I think for the thrash community, thankfully we have people like this. And we have people like, even in my band. I mean, Scott Ian is one of the best right hands in thrash also. So we are very lucky in this thrash community to have these guys. They can play these fucking amazing riffs. So I don't really single out people. Because everybody's got their thing. Just think of the great stuff all of these guys have come up with. So I just enjoy it, man. I think we have a plethora of great guitar players and great riffs.

February 9, 1985. In Chicago, Metallica play the world's first thrash metal ballad, "Fade to Black," live for the first time—unless one wants to give that prize to Judas Priest with "Beyond the Realms of Death" or Iron Maiden with "Remember Tomorrow."

February 16, 1985. Possessed issue their first album, *Seven Churches*. It is extreme, brutal, messy, noisy, Satanic thrash, or, in other words, proto-black metal. But like Venom (and later Bathory), there are confounding elements of both thrash and death.



February 27, 1985. Joey Belladonna performs his first show as Anthrax's new lead vocalist, and as Dan Spitz suggests, Anthrax push the proposition that thrash can peacefully co-exist with traditional Rob Halford-esque vocals (to some extent, Helloween skirts the edges of this idea as well).

Early 1985. Guitarist Michael Gilbert joins Flotsam and Jetsam, heavying this bad luck band's sound.

Early 1985. Chicago's Zoetrope issue their debut album, *Amnesty*, on Combat.

March 1985

March 1985. Dark Angel's debut album, *We Have Arrived*, arrives kind of late.

March 1985. D.R.I. issue their second album, *Dealing with It!*, on Metal Blade Records. Brian Slagel proves to have an open mind and a fresh perspective on what the label can include under its banner.

March 1985. Sepultura vocalist Wagner Lamounier leaves the band, resurfacing as leader of well-respected blackened thrash pioneers Sarcofago. Max Cavalera takes over the role of vocalist for the band.

Sepultura vocalist and bassist Max Cavalera on the birth of metal and his early inspirations:

To me it's Sabbath. At least that's what made it official, who made it real and authentic. The riffs and the album covers and the subjects—*Paranoid*, *Master of Reality*, *Sabotage*—all these great names, these great album covers, this crazy guy Ozzy with his high-pitched voice. They're from Birmingham, which is a fucked-up place, a factory place, and the whole thing together, it fit perfect. It was like the perfect band.

So from early days I remember when you mentioned that you like Black Sabbath it made you cool inside and to tell people, "I'm into Black Sabbath, man. What do you listen to?" And some other guy would say, "I like AC/DC, I like Judas Priest." Those are cool, too, but Black Sabbath was heavier for some reason. I give them a lot of credit.

It's cool for me to know that when I was one year old, they were releasing *Black Sabbath*. So I was in the crib having my mom and dad wiping my ass, they're already there doing *Black Sabbath*, going through the storm. So I gotta give respect just for that fact itself. Because when I was one year old, a baby, they were already playing "Electric Funeral" somewhere else in the world. That itself is already amazing to me.

And they've kept going for all the years. I like all phases of Black Sabbath. I love when Ozzy left and Dio joined Black Sabbath; the albums that Dio gave us, *Heaven and Hell* and *Mob Rules*, were amazing records. But I think it started with the name. Black Sabbath—like what the fuck is a Black Sabbath, you know? It sounds heavy as fuck. I don't even know exactly what it means. Sabbath is some Jewish thing, right? And black is black. I don't know, it's just heavy, man. It just had that sound to it.

Led Zeppelin was pretty heavy too. You get something like "Immigrant Song"… I have some DVD of Zeppelin playing that live and it's still heavy today. Like Bonham was a super-heavy, strong-playing drummer. But Zeppelin also had a lot of folk and acoustic stuff while Sabbath was more heavy. To me, that's what was the secret thing that made me fall in love with Sabbath was those heavy Tony Iommi riffs. The guy's an amazing solo player, but he made riffing into an art form and took it to the ultimate level, you know?

His riffs are like… you can hum them in your head, they're so catchy. How can you not love that?

But my love of metal came directly from our lifestyle, because at that time, we had a pretty good life when my dad was alive, because he was Ambassador of Italy in Brazil. Respectful man and we had good money so we lived in Sao Paulo. So we had a normal childhood with everything with toys and everything that anybody else had.

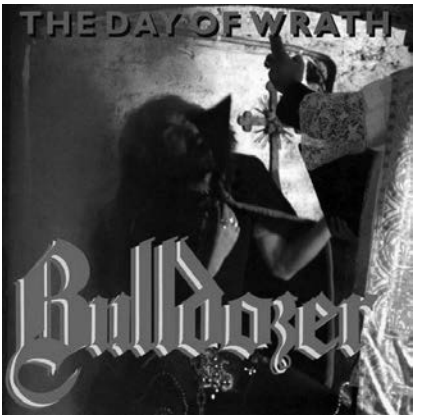
And then all of a sudden he died when we were nine years old, and our life just went completely upside-down. We moved back to Belo Horizonte where I was born. My mom had to work, I had to work, Igor had to work, and all of a sudden our life was totally fucking shitty. It was like somebody flicked a switch from a good life to a fucked-up life and we just got thrown in the shit. And we were rebelling against that. We were like trying to understand why the shit had to turn this way. Why he had to die and why it's so fucked-up now. We don't have any money and life sucks now.

But that's when music came in and I became instantly addicted to it. It was like… the fuel that I needed, that me and Igor needed, to rebel against all this shit. Our life sucks, we hate our job, you hate your boss, you hate most of the people around you except most of your friends. You put on a metal record, it made everything right. It made all that shit disappear. That's what metal records do. It was like medicine, you know?

Of course the sound has a lot to do with it, but it's been my own life journey into trying to find myself through the sounds, through the albums. I'm always searching for my own identity, even today. Discovering new things about yourself even 40 years later. But the other part of it is the fan factor is huge in metal. I love the fans. Even when they talk shit I still understand. I don't get so mad. It's like I know why you guys get mad at me sometimes; it's cool. I still love you.

To me, it would be my bible. It saved me, like really. Without trying to sound any cliché, but the way things were going for me and Igor, at that time with the friendships we had, without music, we were going to turn out bad. We were just going to. Because we were already kicked out of every school and we got arrested already, twice—me and Igor got arrested spray-painting some wall. You know it's going bad. You know it's going bad. You feel it, and then music came and it saved me. It saved me and Igor from probably being in jail forever or being dead. So I owe everything to music.

March 13, 1985. Italian speed/black/thrash legends Bulldozer issue their debut album, *The Day of Wrath*, on Roadrunner. The album is produced by Tank's Algy Ward, working at Psycho Studios in Milan, Italy.



March 15, 1985. Death Angel open for Metallica and Armored Saint, at the Kabuki in San Francisco.

April 1985

April 1985. Old Bridge, New Jersey's Blessed Death issue their debut album, *Kill or Be Killed*, on Megaforce Records.

April 1985. Anthony Bramante plays his first gig with Nuclear Assault, at L'Amour in Brooklyn.

April 1985. Venom issue their fourth album, *Possessed*. This is the last of the early, thrash-influential albums, last with the classic lineup of Lant/Dunn/Bray, and last before the band's releases become spread-out and made by compromised lineups.

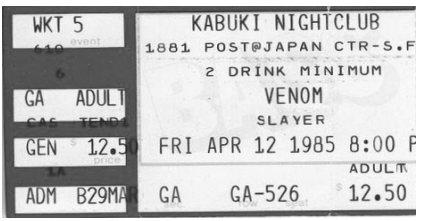
Venom drummer Abaddon:

Welcome to Hell, *Black Metal*, *At War with Satan* and *Possessed* have stood test of time. The recording of all those albums was kind of one era of Venom. Things started to go a bit wrong toward the end of that. I can't say that things have gone particularly better or worse after *Welcome to Hell*, because with *Black Metal* we were all gelled together as one thing. We were touring then. We weren't aware we were writing our own little piece of history. We were just youngish people getting up and getting on with it. Learning the instruments and learning how you go about live work.

It never got to be boring. Venom never got to be 360 gigs in 365 days. A lot of people say "Are you jealous of Metallica?" because of

their huge success. I'm maybe jealous of the royalty checks, but I certainly wouldn't be jealous of the workloads the lads put in. It's a full-time occupation and I got out of having a full-time occupation in a factory to get into this and I want to be in this for rock 'n' roll.

From the point of view of the record, we started to get to the point where certain members of the band wanted their own songs played in their own way. The whole point of Venom was that we used to gel together. That's one of the things, at the moment, that we're still striking out to achieve. If I come up with a riff or a piece of music and someone wants to change it, that's cool by me. If it's better, it's better.



But when it's just "This is my song and we play it this way," you start to lose it and that's what happened around the time of *Possessed*. It was like, "You play the drums like this," and I was like okay. If you want some passion, say to me, "I've got this riff. Play it with me and we'll play it together and it'll sound great." But if you want to do that, then buy a drum machine. I'll play on anybody's album. I'll do anything for nothing if people turn up or ring up and say, "Would you do this?" and it'll be "Yeah, cool, great, no problem."

But then if I turn up and they just go, "This is what I want you to play in this manner," then it's like well, you don't want me involved, you just want somebody who's going to turn up and play some drums. If you want me to get involved, I will do. Maybe it had been better that we did *Welcome to Hell* in three days. Maybe the fact that we took four or five weeks for all of *Possessed*, people would say that's what's wrong with it. You took too long and inspected it too much.

Slayer guitarist Kerry King:
We took Venom and made it better (laughs). But before Venom, it would have been Priest and Maiden. Jeff was into Southern California punk. Overall though, Sabbath… anything heavy.

April 1985. Razor issue their debut album, *Executioner's Song*. The sound is a fast and loose hybrid between speed metal and thrash.

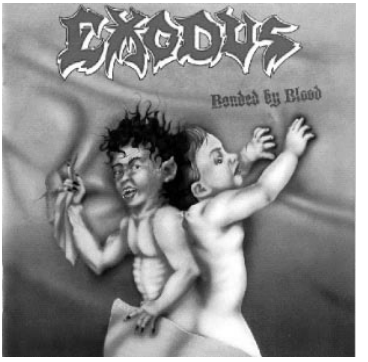
April 2, 1985. *Hell Awaits*, Slayer's second full-length, and last album for Metal Blade Records is released.

Slayer guitarist Jeff Hanneman:
Hell Awaits is where we really started to slow down and get into more riffs. Kerry and I just wanted to change up every chance we got. We'd start a song and in 20 seconds it would change. And some of those songs would be pretty long, with a lot of guitar riffs, a lot of changes, a lot of things going on.

Slayer guitarist Kerry King on the title, *Hell Awaits*:
I think that title came from when we used to flyer our own gigs, doing all the little clubs in Orange County. I remember some of our early flyers said, "Evil has no boundaries, demons showed no mercy," like from the first record. And then we started putting, "Come see Slayer. Hell awaits."

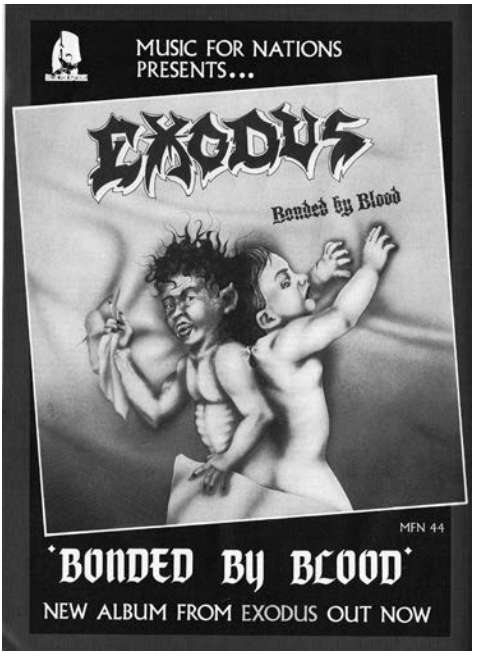
Slayer vocalist and bassist on *Hell Awaits* highlight track "At Dawn They Sleep:"
Wow, I was a co-author to that. There were three authors to that song: Kerry, Jeff and me. The song was basically about vampires. I had some stuff written and I asked them if they cared if I put my two cents into the song, because I hadn't really written anything for anything. And when I showed them what I had, they really liked it. That was from a book I had read a long time ago, Stephen King's *Salem's Lot*, and that gave me the idea about the philosophy behind vampires, which I also learned a lot about from *Interview with the Vampire*.

April 5, 1985. Exodus' influential *Bonded by Blood* album, initially titled *A Lesson in Violence*, is issued independently on Torrid Records. It is the only Exodus album to feature local legend Paul Baloff on vocals, until a reunion live album in '97.



Exodus guitarist Gary Holt:
Thrash was invented because it didn't have rules. What are rules? I think if we went by the rules, we would never have made *Bonded by Blood* and never sang about raping someone's wife and play those kinds of songs. The rules are meant to

be broken. Obviously if you're into a certain musical style, then you don't want to betray it, but you certainly want to expand upon it.



We were destructive little punks. We were more like punks than headbangers back then. Our behavior, our attitudes… our attitude was pretty much all bad, all the time, unless you were part of the circle; otherwise we'd abuse the hell out of you. Paul, you look at the old pictures, he'd have six inches of scraps of cloth tied around his wrist. I'd have a few, but not as many as him, and those were by forcibly making people remove their hair band shirts so we could slice pieces off and tie it around our wrist, like a badge of honour. And Paul would tell them, "Look, are you gonna do it with your shirt off or shirt on?" And he's got a fucking knife in his hand. And he'd do it because he wasn't playing around. It was crazy, it was a war.

We got away with a lot of murder because we all were very young and we looked… we could bat our eyes and look very angelic after just destroying someone's house and peeing in the shampoo and killing goldfish and whatever. We were kids; we spent every waking moment playing guitar and playing drums and all that kind of stuff. And the musicianship mattered; it came first and foremost to the band. It had to be played well. But once we went out for the evening, shit hit the fan, to say the least.

I think first and foremost, thrash metal is a genre that requires precision in playing. There's so much picking going on and if you're not playing it well, it's just going to sound like a big mess. If you're picking these 32nd notes for five minutes, you need to do them well. And the solos… our heroes were all like hard rock guys, everyone from Frank Marino to Ted Nugent to Angus Young, Tony Iommi, Tipton and Downing and Smith and Murray and all these guys who were just phenomenal lead players. So those were the dudes that got us excited. We wanted to play like them but we wanted to do it in our own little world of high speed metal.

Metallica guitarist Kirk Hammett on *Bonded by Blood*:

It was really different, because they had Rick Hunolt on guitar, and he was like this totally different guitar player than I am. And when it was him and Gary together, it made a pretty intense team. Because, you know, to a certain extent, they both play similarly. And when I was in Exodus, I really tried to play as different from Gary as possible, so that you would be able to pick the two of us out, at any given time, when listening to us; that was kind of my approach.

With Rick, it always seemed like it was a race to the end (laughs). A race to the finish! Whenever those guys started playing together, it was crazy. It was fun and cool to watch—super, super intense. So you know, for me, they were a different band once I left them. And I loved it. A lot of my riffs are on *Bonded by Blood*, scattered here and there. And when it came out, I was just like, you know, whatever (laughs). I was just like, oh, I'll just have it, whatever.

And the funny thing is like, there might've been, I think, even a couple of live songs from the old Exodus time, that they recorded, maybe in the last ten or 15 years which are like most of my songs. And I'm not even credited there (laughs). But, you know what? I'm just like, whatever. It's just not worth it to me to make a big stink about it. It's better to move on. Because it's so long ago and it just doesn't mean that much to make a big stink about it. It's all just water under the bridge. But we all loved *Bonded by Blood*. James and I, and Cliff loved it. Yeah, I think all of us did. We all thought it was great.

April 12, 1985. Exodus do an in-store at local metal hangout The Record Vault, along with Venom and Slayer. The trio are in the midst of a short US tour together.

Exodus guitarist Gary Holt on the reception of *Bonded by Blood*:

Yeah the reviews and that were outstanding, so I have no complaints at all about that. It's funny now how you mention its standing as like a thrash metal classic. Someone told me that a magazine recently had like a list of the top thrash albums of all time, and they had *Bonded* listed at like #15. Are you fucking kidding? I thought that was pretty ridiculous. But I have no complaints. I know what we accomplished then.

At the Gates vocalist Tomas Lindberg on the importance of Exodus: The American sound was also always a bit more clear, a bit more defined and precise. And I think the main thrash band of America, for me, has always been Exodus, because of the power and the intensity of what they do—it's still overwhelming after all these years. And I think they have more of the essence of thrash than any of the other big bands.

April 15, 1985. Overkill issue their debut album, *Feel the Fire*, on Megaforce Records. The album is produced by The Rods' Carl Canedy, and includes a much discussed cover of The Dead Boys' "Sonic Reducer."

Overkill vocalist Bobby "Blitz" Ellsworth:

When I think about our first record, *Feel the Fire*, I think it was chaos for the sake of chaos. And there's something very charming about that because if you can pull it all together, then that chaos has an attractive nature to it because, "How did you pull that off?" And I hear that every time I listen to that record or when I have to bone up for something on the road. We have to put "Feel the Fire" in because we may interchange two or three.

And I say, wow, we were just chaotic for the sake of being chaotic. And I hear us change to a point where we start learning to control the chaos. And like a heavyweight prizefighter knows where to hit, when to hit and when the guard is down, that punch can be very powerful as opposed to just flailing around with a guy with a good defense. We keep going back to these fighting metaphors.

You know Jonny Zazula was never the one who was attracted to Overkill—his wife Marsha was. When Megaforce started, it was in one of his houses. You would walk into his house… and remember, really pre-computer. You're talking about the files on tables and on couches and paper, physical paper, you know. But he owned a record store very close to where he lived, and very close to where we were rehearsing. We were becoming part of the scene.

Then we financed the first Overkill EP, and it turns out that because of our own promotion for ourselves, that we would always sell out of these things, and always have to stock them. That's where they got notice of us. So, I think Jonny's input with Marsha's love of the band was, "I can't deny that they are not moving ten, 15, 20 units a week out of my store." You know, to people who keep coming back and asking for Overkill.

I think what Jonny did was, he saw that it was something different. I mean, we were obviously not Anthrax. You know, I always think of Overkill and Anthrax in that New York scene, they were very different from each other. Whether it would be our personalities or

whether it would be the way we approach our music. I think we have a narrower view of things. We were metalhead blue collar guys, and I think Anthrax looked at things wider. They were more artists than us, and one who attained a status based on their talents and artistic idea. Overkill wants to knock down buildings.

So somewhere in there there is a charm to both of them, and I think that Jonny always recognized the artist but Marsha recognized our tenacity. Eventually Jonny came over and said, "There is beauty in knocking down buildings." So, I think that that's really where the attraction was early with Overkill. We were the guys who always had that reputation of Overkill walking into a bar and people going, "Fucking Overkill is here. Keep your hand on your money and don't insult them."

But I always think of Jonny as the idea guy. Sometimes you can sit in a room with Jonny for an hour, and there's an idea a minute. So you're talking 60 ideas. It starts off with, "By the way," or, "Do you know something?" And then you hear something follow that, in a sentence or a statement. And I think one a minute, over a 16-hour day of working, he comes up with all those ideas and you start doing the math, that some of them, even a small percentage, are good. Then that becomes a catalyst for how this whole segment of this industry has changed. Because a lot of those ideas are great.

I think Marsha's role was to harness the great ones (laughs). Tie them down, nurture them with fortified vitamins and water, and together they became a great idea, where actually some of these ideas over the course of that 16-hour day grew into mighty oak trees. And so I really think that when I look back on Jon—and our relationship with him still to this day—is that I can give him a call with a question that I have, and somewhere within there, I'll hear, "You know what you should do?" (laughs). So he's the real deal, when I think of why this genre is what it is.

April 22, 1985. Anvil issue a greatest hits and rarities album called *Backwaxed*.

Anvil guitarist Lips:

That was a record after the fact. Of course we got dropped right after *Forged in Fire*, and that's part of what put us into the tailspin. Nobody knew what the fuck was going on. I had members in the band who wanted to be fucking cream puffs, no more heavy metal kind of shit, and we ended up turning out *Strength of Steel*.

But before that, it must've been about a year after *Forged in Fire*, the record company calls me up and says we're putting out a compilation album of some unreleased stuff. And I was like, "Oh no, you bastards!" And they did that, and that was it. Stuff that never should have been put out got put out. That's how I felt about it.

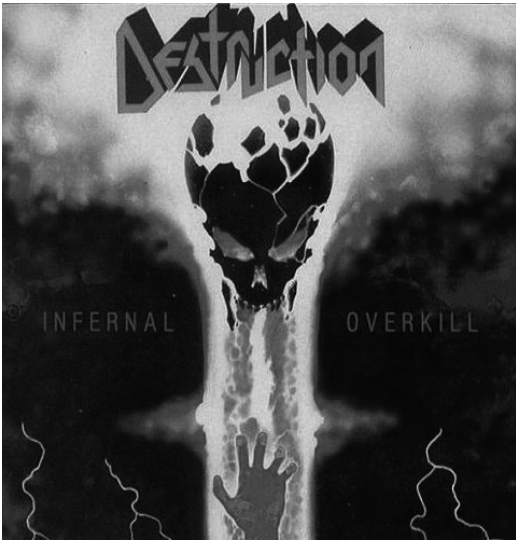
The song "Backwaxed" itself wasn't bad. It was a song we pulled from *Forged in Fire*, but it was pulled from that record by me because I thought it was a bit too vulgar for the rest of the record. But as it turned out, it wasn't. It was okay. It probably should have took the place of "Make It Up to You" or "Never Deceive Me" on that record.

Anvil drummer Robb Reiner:
Backwaxed just came out and we had very little to do with it. We had left Attic Records. After *Forged in Fire*, we got involved with David Krebs, out of New York. He was our manager from the *Forged in Fire* period. We got out of that Attic deal and he was going to try get us another deal in America. And in the process Al Mair put out that *Backwaxed*, with the song "Backwaxed" which was a left over from *Forged in Fire*, plus some demos and other studio tracks. And I knew nothing about it until it was in our face. I'm grateful looking back that happened, because it's a cool little thing.

May 1985

May 1985. Bay Area thrash latecomers Heathen play their first show, in hometown San Francisco.

May 24, 1985. Seminal German thrashers Destruction issue their debut full-length, *Infernal Overkill*.



Destruction vocalist and bassist Schmier:
It's the album with the most Destruction classics on it. It is the fan's favourite and it is the album we play the most songs off of. And of course the tour with Slayer has always been in our minds.

May 26, 1985. Slayer perform their first show in Europe, at the Heavy Sound Festival, Poeringe, Belgium. With UFO as headliner, also on the bill were Crossfire, Warlock, Lee Aaron, Tokyo Blade, Pretty Maids and Tobruk. A month of European touring follows, much of it with Destruction.

Slayer guitarist Kerry King on when he noticed thrash was taking off:

Man I could go a number of ways with that. Probably the first time we went to Europe, which was '85, and our first tour, our first show, was the Heavy Sounds festival in Belgium. And that's the photo where the back of *Reign in Blood* was shot. We were second on the bill to UFO. Our first show in Europe. That's pretty big. UFO, they weren't in their prime, but they were still a big band. Looking back, I was a big UFO fan, so I thought this is pretty cool. We're second on the bill to UFO! Another time, a few years down the line, around 1990 we did the Sports Arena in LA, and we headlined. Testament opened and we sold it out. From being an LA person, that was huge for me.

But Belgium was insane! We didn't have Ozzfest back then, so we didn't really have anything to compare it to. You might have a once every few years show. I remember ages ago, Foreigner and Black Sabbath and a couple others played, and that was a big stadium show. I was there. But that's not something we would have for comparison because it's not yearly, it's not anything like that. So to have the Heavy Sound festival, it was just like wow, this happens all the time here? It's yearly. It's awesome. It's like Download or Castle Donington, all the crazy historic European festivals that happen every year.

May 27, 1985. Bathory issue their second album, *The Return.....*

Bathory guitarist and vocalist Quorthon:

By the time the first album became such a tremendous hit, and it was decided that we should make a second album, I still didn't think of Bathory as something that would go on into the 21st century. At the time, the ever-ruling trend in Sweden was the sound and style of the band Europe. Every asshole that I had coming down to the rehearsal place to audition, looked and played that shit. It didn't matter that we had a record contract. People just didn't want to sweat and wear black spiked leather.

I would audition tons of bass players and drummers between 1984 and 1988. When some of the albums were recorded, I could end up having played up to 50% of the bass on a record. When an album was released, the question was if we really should confuse those who bought the record by have listed on the album cover a set of names of

people who were not in the band anymore. They might have played on the tracks, but had decided that commercial metal was their thing and consequently left shortly after the recording or even during the making of an album. We decided to just release the albums without names and pictures.

Still someone had to answer questions when talking to the fanzines that wrote us and asked for interviews. It was only natural that it was going to be me answering the questions and occasionally my picture would be in the interviews. By the time we actually did have a stable lineup that stayed together for more than six months and we actually could put a lineup photo and names on an album—*Blood Fire Death*—people were so used to the fucking one-man band issue. They just brushed the lineup shot off as a fake. I realized then it didn't matter what we said or did, people make their own mind up about things. So I stopped caring about all that bullshit.

And I am still amazed that people are interested in knowing the name of someone who might have banged on the drums on this or that song. I don't even remember their names and I don't care to remember.

June 1985

June 1985. Sabbat forms in Nottingham, England, from the ashes of a band called Hydra.

June 1985. MTV introduces Heavy Metal Mania, soon to be replaced by Headbangers Ball.

June 11 – 20, 1985. Destruction support Slayer on a German tour.

Destruction vocalist and bassist Schmier:

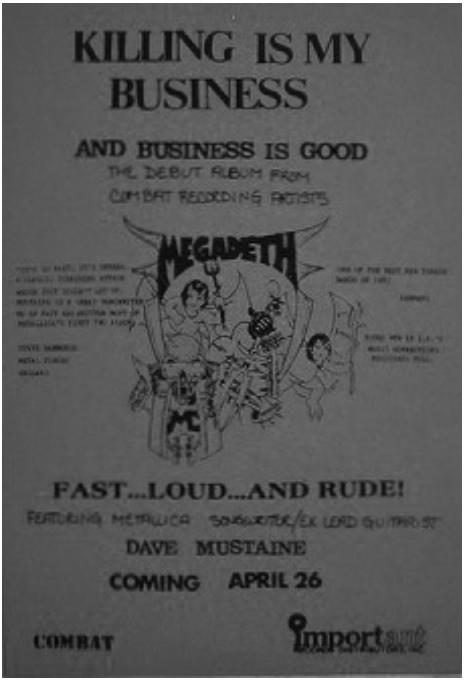
The first time we played with Slayer in Europe was great because we were very young and of course Slayer were the gods back then. And it was great when we played for the first time in Spain and southern Europe or South America because people are totally wild. Japan is very, very strange but very nice and professional. I think that if you see a fan getting too close and too much into it, you try to step away a little and keep some distance, but usually we only had good experiences with the fans. We try to go into the crowd and talk with the people after the show, although of course there are always crazy people around.

But back to Slayer, yes, Slayer fucked us up really bad. This is an old story actually. It was on the *Reign in Blood* tour, the second time we toured with them, and they asked us to back them up because Malice, the support band, quit and they had a really shitty kind of tour manager. And it was a bad experience because we knew Slayer from before and we have a good time with them, but then it turned out to be very strange because they were very big at this moment and the tour manager was a real asshole, but he was also working with Metallica at the same time . Like just a big-headed American kind of guy.

On the other hand, Motörhead was really good to us. Lemmy is Lemmy. He's not that personable, but he was cool. I remember the first time we played with them he came into the room and said, "Hi, I'm Lemmy, do you have something to drink?" And we were like, "No nothing." And he just turned away and walked out of the room, and we were like, "What the hell?" And then he came back with a box of beer and put it on the table and said, "I hate it when my bands have nothing to drink!" and then he left. So we were like, Lemmy

is cool! Motörhead always treated us really good and I have a lot of respect. And Mikky Dee their drummer is one of the greatest guys on the scene, very, very nice, polite; they really care about how the opening bands are treated.

June 12, 1985. Megadeth issue their debut album, *Killing Is My Business… and Business Is Good!*, on Combat/Relativity. Dave Mustaine has taken over two years to establish himself after being fired from Metallica.



Megadeth vocalist and guitarist Dave Mustaine:

Metallica started in '81, but it was like a cookie cutter making the same cookie. I wanted to change things. So when I left, I didn't want to be seen like I was ripping them off. Not that they need another band in the universe ripping them off (laughs). But I wanted to try something different and a little more advanced.

I'm not saying that we're more advanced than the next guy, but we wanted to do something more thrashier. You know, when there was speed metal, thrash metal, we were up there, we were some of the kings of that stuff. Now the genre has pretty much gone through so many different fusions into death, gore, grindcore, black, all these different types of metal. Back then they had just one category for it, before all these spawnings. I think it was easier to understand these things.

Megadeth bassist Dave Ellefson:
You have your whole life to make your first record, and then after that you've got about nine months to follow them up (laughs). I thought *Killing Is My Business* had a lot of melody to it that I think got overlooked maybe because of lack of money—we weren't able to produce it that well.

Megadeth guitarist Chris Poland on Megadeth mascot Vic Rattlehead:
Oh, that's all Dave's. You know how Eddie was the guy for Iron Maiden? Well, Dave had Vic Rattlehead, the victim. And he hears no evil, because his ears are covered, and his eyes are covered, so he sees no evil, and his mouth's sewn shut. Basically he is our Eddie. And that's all Dave's artwork. He drew the very first T-shirt.

Megadeth touring guitarist Mike Albert on original Megadeth drummer Gar Samuelson and what he brought to the band's sound:
Gar was amazing, and he was one of the nicest guys. Everybody knows he was a fusion guy. But I knew him years prior when he was with Chris with the New Yorkers, and hung out with them, jammed with them. He was a Billy Cobham/Lenny White kind of guy, fusion guy.

And he really interpreted… I mean, he really liked Hendrix and that stuff, but primarily him and Chris were into that style. And I saw him evolve. The first part of the tour, I remember when we started rehearsing for the first US tour, he was like kind of a jazz guy, really didn't think he fit that much in the band. And I thought man, didn't make sense, and then by the time we got back from the last city, we did like 30, 40 cities, we came back, and he was like amazing. He picked up the genre and he just sounded completely like a killer drummer I'd never heard before, in the style he was doing.

And even Chris came to the rehearsal after we came back from the US tour. He hadn't seen us as a band for a while, and he saw Gar, and the first thing he said to Gar was, "My God, I've never heard you sound so good. What the hell!" Gar just caught onto it, man. But the tour, and seeing the other bands play, it's just amazing to see how he accomplished so much. I mean, he was just amazing after that. He got it, and he was one of the best.

Elektra A&R rep Michael Alago on not signing Megadeth:

Dave felt, you know Michael, you're going to be so obsessed and you're going to be always with Metallica. And I guess in a way I didn't blame him. But I was like a 23-year-old young and excited A&R person who just thought, you know what? I want to work with the best bands. And I thought Megadeth was fucking awesome. But you don't get everything you want and that's okay too.

June 16, 1985. Canada's Sacrifice issue a demo called *The Exorcism*. The following night's concert is "Tribute to Slayer" night at famed Toronto club, Larry's Hideaway. Before the summer is out, the band support Exodus at the same venue, along with like-minded speed metal locals, Slaughter.

Sacrifice vocalist and guitarist Rob Urbinati:

There is one thing a band can't get when they first form, and that's emotion in your tunes. That comes from time; it evolves with the band. It also comes from the band's chemistry. I feel that that's our biggest improvement or involvement, our emotion.

But this music, I don't think thrash will ever be as big as Judas Priest or Iron Maiden, just because it's basically so full of aggression. I don't think that it'll hit such a big level for an individual band—Metallica is an exception—but I do think that many will have long careers, and that the record companies will stick behind it. It's kind of hard to make money that way, but if you stick to what you believe in and ignore trends, I feel that you will be respected for it and will always have a great following and a decent income.

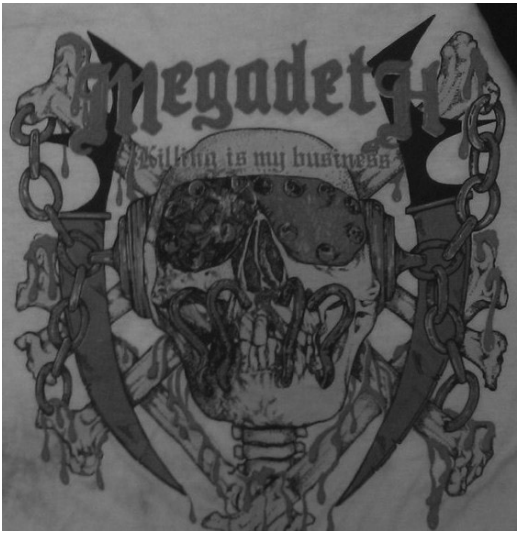
June 26 – August 3, 1985. Exciter embark upon an intensive US tour in support of their third album, *Long Live the Loud*, playing with Megadeth, who had just debuted with *Killing Is My Business... And Business Is Good!*.

CONCERT EVENT
STARRING
DESTINED TO DESTROY
EXCITER
EXPLOSIVE CRUSHING TRAUMA
READY TO KICK A—
PLUS
MEGADETH AND MILITIA
SPECIAL THANKS TO KISS FM!!!
WED. JULY 17 SEVEN THIRTY PM RANDY'S
At Bandera and Hillcrest 2 miles inside Loop 410
Tickets only $7.00 NOW available at Hogwild, Hastings, Flipside on South Military and South Texas Tickets Inc.
Because of this special anniversary price they wont last long Get em NOW
CAUS' IT'S JUST 2 DAMN GOOD 2 SAVE TILL THE WEEKEND!
Check out details to win a one night stand with Exciter! And if you think your the SEXIEST, HEAVIEST girl around see details to win the Miss Metal Contest, Prizes include kul cash, free passes, guest DJ on the Metal Hour and more!
A massive THANX 2 those who labored the long hours, supported the cause, and made the difference! Extra THANX 2 Roland "BIG GUY" Gloria and crüe, and the Unholy Book for their undying patience.
LOOP 410
CALLAGHAN
HILLCREST

Exciter drummer Dan Beehler on the Bay Area thrash scene and playing with Megadeth:

Oh man, that was unbelievable. I'll never forget the first time we played The Stone in San Francisco. Metallica was there, and the place was sold-out, and it was just incredible. It was one of our first introductions to stagediving. Back then they called it slam-dancing. It was just seeing a sea of hair flying from the stage. It was new for us,

and we had come across the states, but once we got to San Francisco it was mind-blowing. I remember a year later we played The Stone again, and Megadeth was opening. And a few members of Aerosmith were there, and I remember looking at them at the side of the stage and they were just shaking their heads, in awe. As much as they had done up to that point, they had never seen it before either. So it was the beginning of something just huge. And I think San Francisco had a big part of it back then.



But yes, in 1985 we toured with Megadeth, and every night, severely, me and the two Daves, Dave Ellefson and Dave Mustaine, would party hard. And the more we went on during the tour, I realized the boys were watching. I remember playing a place in Texas and there was a little balcony above my drums, back behind the stage, and I remember looking up and they're all hanging over the balcony watching me.

So sure enough, we get to Sacramento and Mustaine pulls me into a hotel room at the end of the night, not that we wouldn't end up there anyway. So we (sniff) stayed up (sniff) all night and talked about things on the tour and, "Hey man, you guys and John just don't get along anymore and it's obvious he's going to quit. Fuckin' move to LA and join us, man, 'cause Gar is on his way out."

I'm sitting there going, "Holy fuck, you're asking me to join you guys?!" What you have to understand is, we're not talking about the Megadeth of today; we're talking about a bunch of guys that Combat Records threw out on tour with us and said, "Take 'em under your wings because they've never toured before." We were the headline act at the time. It's really hard to say that, but to make a long story short, they asked me to join so...

I knew John was out; we did our last show in Vancouver and we were traveling in different vehicles and we weren't talking and I knew it was over. And the story that Ricci pulls out of his ass about Slayer, and me not wanting to open for them in Montreal… there was no Exciter and I had the Walkman on learning Megadeth's first album in

the motor home for four days across the prairies on the way home, and all I could think about was joining Mustaine and Megadeth.

When I got home, I made the stupid decision to keep Exciter going instead of joining them. But you have to understand the factors that weighed into my decision. They weren't what they are today and they were pretty crazy. They went through like five vehicles on the tour. It was like, "Okay, what do I do?" Move to Hollywood and join up with the boys and either die or have to call my parents to fly me home in six months?

'Cause I wasn't any better than them at the time and that's what scared me off. That was '85, the *Long Live the Loud* tour, and they were supporting us. I spent a long time making my decision, which was a stupid decision. And for a little bit more trivia, the guy that they did get was, his name was Chuck Behler, and he looked like me. Right after they asked me, they went out and got Chuck Behler. The other time was 1989; Kronos asked me to join Venom, and we had toured with them and we were great friends so I was considering it. I had the set list and I learned the songs and I wanted to start....

Mid-1985. Chicago "hardcore street metal" rockers Zoetrope issue a second demo, *Metal Log Vol. 2*.

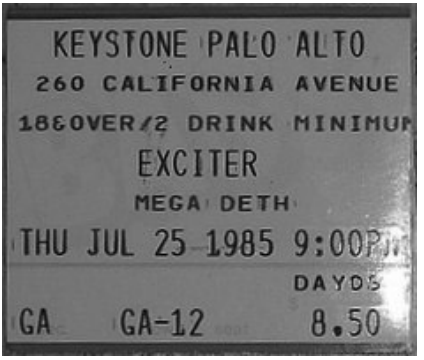
Mid-1985. Exciter issue their third album, *Long Live the Loud*, which found the band working with producer Guy Bidmead at Britannia Row in London. The band is represented by Combat in the US and Music for Nations in the UK.

TOTAL DEATH FROM
MUSIC FOR NATIONS
EXODUS
Megadeth
LONG LIVE THE LOUD
ALBUMS
SAVATAGE – "THE DUNGEONS ARE CALLING" MFN 42
EXODUS – "BONDED BY BLOOD" MFN 44
MEGADETH – "KILLING IS MY BUSINESS, AND BUSINESS IS GOOD" MFN 46
EXCITER – "LONG LIVE THE LOUD" MFN 47
TO CELEBRATE 52 CONSECUTIVE WEEKS IN THE U.K.
HEAVY METAL CHART, A LIMITED EDITION PIG SHAPED DISC
12" WASP – "ANIMAL (F**K LIKE A BEAST) PIG 109
OUT NOW ON MFN

Exciter vocalist and drummer Dan Beehler:

Long Live the Loud was a bit of a change. It kind of slowed down for some reason. Not a conscious thing, but that was the songs we had and we did a bunch of touring for *Violence* so I don't think we had enough time to sit down and write a really good album. There were a few songs on *Long Live the Loud* that were good, but again it's the production. We were huge

Motörhead fans, we'd just toured with them, and we were offered the opportunity to do *Long Live the Loud* with Guy Bidmead who had just done *No Remorse*. So of course we went, "Holy shit, man, let's do it."



And that's the same thing that happened with *Violence*. We were offered to go and do it with Paul Curcio in Rochester—he did *Kill 'em All*—or go to Ithaca and do it with Carl Canedy. And I was a huge Rods fan; Carl is a drummer… he's gonna know. I remember those days saying, "Who's this Paul Curcio guy? I don't know." And we're going, "Fuckin' Carl is in The Rods man, he's a drummer, he's gonna know, he's gonna know." And that's why we made that decision, which is another... not a stupid decision. I shouldn't say that 'cause I love Carl, but that's the decision we made at the time.

And when we were offered to do *Long Live the Loud* with Guy Bidmead, we were just on this Motörhead craze and, "Oh wow, we can do it in London, let's go." There are some good tunes on there, but again, where the hell is the *Heavy Metal Maniac* fuckin' guitar sound, you know what I mean? You go and put on "The Holocaust" and then you put on *Long Live the Loud* or any other Exciter album and it's like, "Why the fuck isn't that applied to that?"

We had the budget to do it. I can remember John Ricci being very aggressive about that. We were all aggressive. We were always pushing it, but it just never happened. And time runs out and we can't work on the guitar anymore and it's like, "Fuck man, why does John not sound like the first album?" "I don't know, it's too late." "Well let's go with it." Not that I'm not proud of those albums but I think that was a lot of our downfall when I look back. If we would have just duplicated that first album, got a little better and a little better, and kept that sound, things would have been different.

So it was a real struggle. It's not like it is today. With the internet and everything you can be from wherever in the world and if you're good and you get recognition, things will happen. We had a real hard struggle in the early days being from Ottawa because nobody knew where Ottawa was and nobody cared and anybody from Toronto couldn't stand Ottawa and if you're from Ottawa you couldn't do anything in Toronto. So, in the early days it was really hard for us to get recognized.

But then all of a sudden, around '83, '84 bands like us and Razor and Anvil… it was like a real Canadian thing that we had. I was pretty

proud of it back then. It was pretty cool. It really hurt back then, and even now when I think back, we'd go to Germany and play to however many people, we played the Hammersmith with Accept, toured with Mötley Crüe and Motörhead, and then we'd come home and we couldn't put like 300 people in a bar in Ottawa. So we just couldn't wait to get the hell out of here again. We were always proud to be Canadian and we knew there was a good Canadian movement going but it took a long time for people from around here to really realize what we did and we wished we would have had the city behind us and people more behind us back then.

It's still a struggle. Canada's a screwed-up country geographically, which may have a lot to do with it. You go to Germany now and it's a remarkable live experience for these fans and to see how it's grown. We've spent a lot of time over there. But we were lucky enough to be able to play certain pockets of the States where we would sell out every night, the old Texas thing, Canadian/Texas thing. And places like Cleveland and Chicago and LA and New York obviously, and a few little places in between, you know we would sell out. We were one of the bands that were lucky enough to get into the US back then because a lot of bands were just Europe and that's it.

In the early days everything just went blasting by like a train and we were young and crazy and didn't really have much time to think. Before we knew it, John was out of the band and so we never really had a chance to sit and decide whether to get the hell out of Canada or not. It never got to that point.

All these Megaforce acts were going out on the road and we'd be on the phone with Jonny Z from Megaforce and he'd be going, "You guys could be on this tour but you're up in Canada and it's going to cost me so much money for an immigration lawyer," which would be recouped anyway, but still. It was just a pain in the ass to get us down from Canada. He had Anthrax, he had Raven, he had Manowar, all these bands at his fingertips, why the hell screw around with us?

So we'd sit in Ottawa while all these other bands stayed on the road. You know, we'd go out on our little tours here and there but

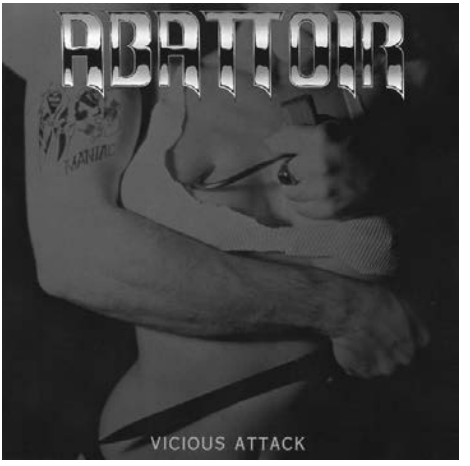
we suffered a lot because of where we were from. And when we got signed in London on Music for Nations it's the same deal: "We gotta bring you over here," you know. So it was a pain in the ass being from here and maybe if we had relocated, things would have been different.

Exciter guitarist John Ricci:
I hate change. The style of the band will always remain the same. I've had many conversations with Lemmy from Motörhead; we've toured with them in years before, and he sticks to his guns. He says, "Look, Motörhead's Motörhead; you like Motörhead or you don't like Motörhead and that's it. If people don't like Motörhead, they can leave the concert hall. If they like Motörhead, they can stay. We're not going to turn our volume down and we just stick to our guns and we do our thing." So I kind of take the same philosophy with Exciter—we have to create our own market. Because we're not easily accepted and still underground—we have to create our fans. We have to go find our fans.

July 1985

July 1, 1985. Stormtroopers of Death issue an impromptu demo called *Crab Society North*. Its 63 tracks are recorded in the kitchen at the famed Pyramid Sound.

July 7, 1985. LA speed metallers Abattoir issue their debut album, *Vicious Attack*, on Combat. The record is produced by Jay Jones, working at Hitman Studios.



Abattoir vocalist Steve Gaines:
If you are familiar with Abattoir, you know that if you expected heavy, you got it. In later years, the pressure to go commercial resulted in my departure, and lack of serious interest by the remaining members. Gradually the band fell apart, but the fire always burned.

July 14, 1985. Metallica record a rehearsal, considered by some to be the *Master of Puppets Demos*. Included are vocal and instrumental versions of

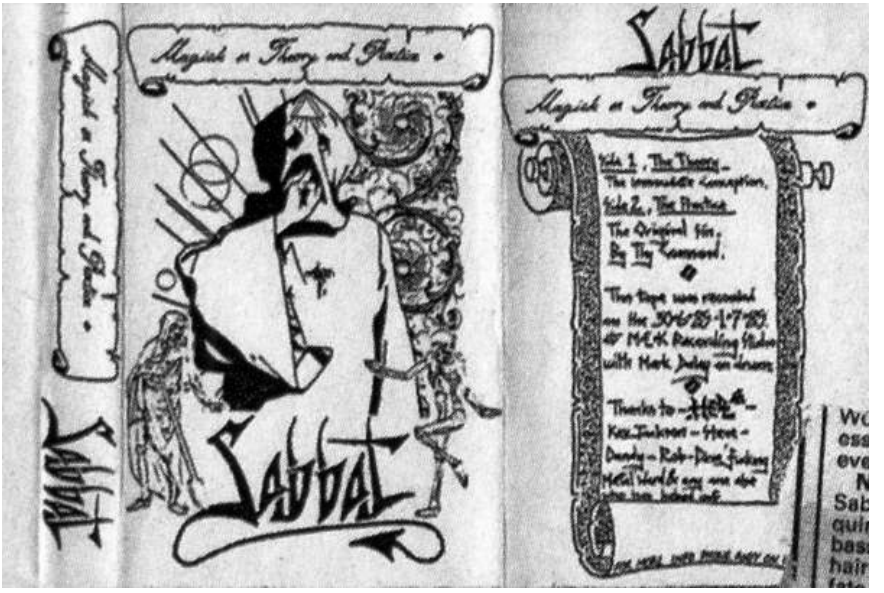
"Battery" and "Disposable Heroes." There are also vocal and instrumental versions of "Only Thing," which would emerge split into two as "Welcome Home (Sanitarium)" and "Orion."

> Lars Ulrich reflecting back in the spring of 1997:
>
> I've never really been one to look ahead that much. I live pretty much in the moment all the time. I think a lot of Americans are very kind of goal-oriented, and I've just never really been that way about climbing ladders and reaching for things; I've always been pretty content with what's going on. And at that time in 1985 when we were playing the New York Theatre there, that was beyond my wildest dreams. We were on top of the world.
>
> Every time I get up in the morning there's somebody who has a problem with something, so I'm kinda used to that. I mean, ever since we put a ballad on the Ride the Lightning album back in 1985 there's always been somebody somewhere who's been sort of annoyed at something that we do. But we pretty much learned 15 years ago not to really care much for that, and always look within.

August 1985

August 1985. Brazil's Stress issue their second album, *Flor Atomica*, which is a combination of thrash and regular heavy metal, but lacking in the historical importance of the debut.

August 1985. Sabbat issue their first demo, *Magick in Practise and Theory*.



August 1985. Founding guitarist John Ricci leaves Exciter.

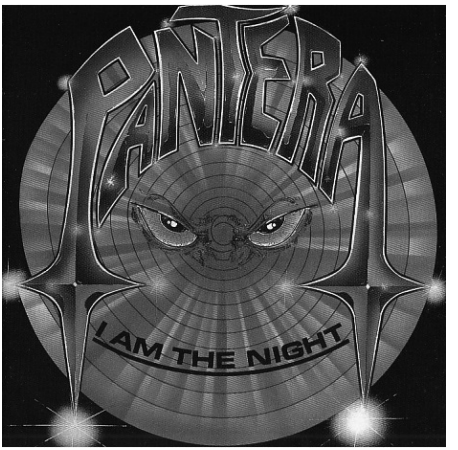
Exciter guitarist John Ricci:

Well, there was conflict in the band, because I started the band. It's my band. And then as we became more popular, everybody wanted to be the boss. Then we started arguing. It was right after the Megadeth tour, August 1985, I had enough, because we were arguing so much and were stressed out and I couldn't carry on any longer. That's why I left the band. I said, "You guys want to be the boss, you guys want to call the shots, go ahead." That's exactly what happened. What happened was the band continued without me. They got another guitar player. They put out two records, *Unveiling the Wicked* and *Exciter*. And then that lineup dissolves.

August 15, 1985. Celtic Frost issue the five-track *Emperor's Return*.

Tom Warrior on *Emperor's Return*:
Emperor's Return marked the first recording with Reed St. Mark, our American drummer. We weren't happy, and we're still not happy about it. We actually don't really like that EP because Reed had just joined the band and we had a deadline to meet, and we went into the studio way too early to meet those deadlines. We just felt that it was way too early and that the band wasn't at its full strength yet. So we were never really happy with it. But, of course, it's an important part of Frost history.

August 16, 1985. Texas power metal strivers Pantera issue their third independent album, *I Am the Night*.



Pantera drummer Vinnie Paul on the band's early independent records, speaking in 1993:

> They were under our independent label, Metal Magic Records. Back then, we paid for the records, the recording and the distribution. With the gigging, we eventually got a record deal. They're actually offering us a lot of money for it, but we're not doing it. Everybody wants us to re-release them except the band. The band says that it's staying an underground collector's item, and if you got one, you're lucky, and if you don't, you probably never will. You can get them, but they're hard to find. That's good enough. Like I said, if you got one, you really do have something that's a collector's item.

August 17, 1985. Metallica play Monsters of Rock at Donington, going on between Ratt and Bon Jovi. James famously disses poser metal from the stage, to an audience of 70,000. This is the first time a thrash band has played the historic festival.

August 17, 1985. Notorious Montreal, Quebec record man Michel Meese, owner of the Rock en Stock store and pioneering speed metal label Banzai Records, puts on the Banzai Axe Festival, or, locally, Le Festival Banzai. The Palladium thrash-fest features an all-American bill consisting of Slayer, Metal Church, Exodus, Hallows Eve and Agent Steel.

August 17, 1985. Death Angel perform a show at the Mahubay Gardens that is a release party for their new *Kill as One* demo. The tracks included are "Thrashers," "Kill as One" and "The Ultra-Violence."

Death Angel vocalist Mark Osegueda:

> The *Kill as One* demo was produced by Kirk Hammett. Our first show we went to was a big pit show, Metallica and Armored Saint. The next day Metallica and Armored Saint did an in-store at the Record Exchange in Walnut Creek, and Rob took his parents' car without their knowledge, and we all piled in—the little Toyota station wagon we called the White Fury—and took it over to the Record Exchange and we all met Metallica and Armored Saint, as far as being in line and getting our stuff signed.
>
> But Death Angel had already been playing in clubs, and Bob Gamber, the owner of Record Exchange, took a liking to Death Angel at the time, and took pictures of Death Angel and Metallica together. I went with Rob, and when I got my record signed at the time, Kirk was like, "Hey, how are you?"
>
> Fast forward two years later when we're all playing Ruthie's Inn. Everyone went to Ruthie's Inn. If you were in a band, if you were into punk, everyone from Exodus, when Metallica wasn't in Europe, they were at Ruthie's Inn on nights off. And whenever we'd see Kirk… we used to do these tapes. Our demos prior to that were literally us getting a boom box, pushing record and playing at the same time, putting the machine in a cardboard box with a jacket over it in the middle of Andy's garage, and playing these songs. And we'd always be running to Kirk, "You gotta hear our new song!"
>
> The ironic thing was he actually listened to us. He'd come back the next time he saw us, "Hey, I really dug that song." And whether he was choking our chain or something… but eventually he really took a liking to us and one day approached us and said, "I'd like to record a demo for you guys." And this is right when *Ride the Lightning* just comes out.
>
> So yeah, okay! So we go up to this place in Glen Ellen, California, up in the wine country, called Jack London studios, which is no

longer there, but the building is. And we recorded the *Kill as One* demo. We kept going up on weekends, as we always did, and it was quite an experience, because we'd all spend the night in this little dark studio, and working with Kirk was great.

So we got that demo out; it came with a promo package because we had a new manager who was actually telling us how to do things, and started sending it out. By this point underground tape trading had gotten huge. We were already sending out live tapes of us, but we had a P.O. box and people knew how to get a hold of us, so we were sending out live tapes of our songs. But when we got this done with packaging and whatnot, it definitely helped. We had a little name for ourselves, but it helped in a huge way that Kirk Hammett produced it. In a huge way.

And all of a sudden all these fanzines were saying, "Send away for this" and everyone started wanting to get this demo. And if you have the original it was great because it had the actual cover… I guess it wasn't cover art, it was just black with the Death Angel logo on it, but you actually had the cover. Of course people start dubbing it and whatnot for their friends, but it went out like wildfire. From that, labels started approaching us because we were getting a lot of press.

We went out to New York for the first time. We played New York at the Old Ritz, and the first time we went up there was Slayer. First time we played out there was with Slayer and Overkill and Death Angel at the Ritz. And this is before we had an album out. We went out there on the *Kill as One* demo. And we hit the stage and people were yelling for Death Angel. They sang "Kill as One," they knew "Thrashers;" it was crazy.

And it was all from underground tape trading which made the scene. It was the organic analog internet—snail mail—and it was great because there was an innocence to it that was just amazing. Because you would send away for this demo tape and you'd wait and check your mail—damn it's not here yet. And eventually when you forgot about it, all of a sudden you'd open your mail one day and, "Ha! I got it!" There was such an amazing innocence to the fans, too. To a certain degree I miss that.

Death Angel guitarist Rob Cavestany on tape trading:

You literally couldn't hear it until the tape came in the mail. It's not like you could log on somewhere or hear it somehow. You just had to wait and hope it sounded good. And the other crazy thing is there weren't as many bands doing it compared to now. Every town, everywhere, there's every band making their own CD.

I'm not saying it's a bad thing, but it's just spread-out and there's so many bands and there's so much technology that people can do it, but back then it was just coming on, so there was less competition, so to speak, less choices. There were just these bands that were doing it. You had a list of tapes you were trying to get, and it was a fairly short enough of a list. You could name all the bands that you could hear of playing some thrash or some metal. You could name them all, and by now there's a million, so many, so your demo CD now gets lost in the shuffle compared to back then.

August 30, 1985. Brandon, Florida's Nasty Savage, led by the incomparable "Nasty" Ron Galletti, issue their self-titled debut, on Metal Blade Records.

Guitarist Ben Meyer on *Nasty Savage*:

It's the classic. Ask the Europeans, that's the one they love the most, a piece of history. A little more basic, but it's still classic. The second one, *Indulgence*, at that time, I think the music was more influenced by other bands that I had heard. At that time, I had gotten into Slayer. But when we did the first album, I had never even heard of Slayer. I didn't really pay attention to what else was going on out there. I started listening to more metal. We were influenced by more… I never want to say that we were influenced by Slayer, but it definitely made my writing much heavier,

The second one is definitely a heavier album. But in the early '80s, I liked Black Sabbath, AC/DC, Ted Nugent, early, early '80s, Judas Priest, standard basic heavy metal. When Ronnie started, he was into the obscure metal bands, things I'd never heard before, and I started listening to it more and enjoying it more. Things like Holocaust, Slayer, Whiplash, Kreator, updated heavier things.

Vocalist Nasty Ronnie on the pre-history of the band as well as *Nasty Savage*:

Well, I think the debut album... even before that, the demo tape, that really made a mark on the heavy metal industry. So it really made our album a really sought-after first release. A lot of people really wanted to hear it, to see what it was like, because of the success we had with our demo tape. So the first album, I mean, so many bands try to put together stuff and they have a dream, and that's what we did: we put together a dream. We had an idea, and actually I came up with the concept of Nasty Savage and Nasty Ronnie, when they accepted me into the band, when they were looking for a singer.

And at that time, it was Ben, a guy named Fred Dregischan, who was our first bass player, and Craig Huffman, so I got in the band with those guys. They had a female singer who they kicked out and I went in and tried out for them. Someone told me that the guys were looking for a singer. And I wasn't really a singer but I thought I kind of always wanted to try.

I said, "Look, man, I've got this concept of Nasty Savage. I'm going to be Nasty Ronnie, the wildest front man/singer." I said I wanted to do networking and marketing. "What we need to do right now is put our money together and record a demo tape of four original songs." We put our money together, we did it, and I said within one year, we need to be signed and touring and getting fan mail from all over the world.

And within one year, that happened. It was kind of an amazing start and it was at a time when metal was really just kicking in. Metallica had just come out. And I think we had a lot of potential in those days. Our album came out under Metal Blade and we only had a one-album deal with them, or a two-album deal, because our management didn't want to give them a long-term go.

So if you look at it, the record company's looking at you, and they're thinking, should I put my money into these guys that have a one-record deal, or these guys who are tied up for seven years? You know, you're going to put your money in the other people. So I think those were some decisions at the early start of Savage that caused some friction and made us wonder, wow, what happened? And then touring and the support and everything, it was the same thing. So the first album came out, and it was pretty well received.

We always said it was savage music played nasty. It's kind of our own style. My lyrics, my writing, my own thing, is all from my heart. If you're doing something from your heart, I think it's a lot more true. With my lyrics, I just try to create visions, messages, things people can relate to and understand and possibly be living the same things in their lives. As far as the music goes, we're so much kind of our

own style that people either loved us or they hated us, because it's so different and it's so unique. They really can't pinpoint who we sound like. So when you don't follow the course of everyone sounding like Slayer or Metallica, at the time when we first came out, it leaves a lot more for people to desire for someone to really appreciate our music for what we do. Because we really do it for ourselves.

August 30, 1985. Thrash supergroup (Anthrax members plus Billy Milano) Stormtroopers of Death issue their debut, *Speak English or Die*.

S.O.D. vocalist Billy Milano:

The '80s era was like my generation's '60s. It had its musical explosion, kind of like disco and in the '70s. All these bands came out that were heavy; it was insane. There was so much to choose from. S.O.D. was around during this period, but it helped usher in another medium: hardcore and punk rock. Not that S.O.D. was either of them, but it helped bring it to the mainstream. That was significant for that era. That record seems to be a novelty record nowadays. People are talking about it like they talk about the '60s. I'm 30 years old and I meet people now who say to me, "When I was 15, I was listening to this band!"

When S.O.D. did its record and it became really popular, I felt it was the duty of the band to go out and play some shows that people could see. Not just New York, but some major markets. To go out and say thanks, and say goodbye. After all, the kids who were spending money on your record, or putting money in your pocket, you've got to give them something more than a record. Now taking that in mind, because I grew up in a hardcore underground, I take a personal and down-to-earth approach to everything that I do.

September 1985

September – October 1985. Sacrifice work with producer Brian Taylor at Future Sound in Toronto on tracks toward their debut album.

September – December 1985. Metallica is in Copenhagen with producer Flemming Rasmussen, recording *Master of Puppets*.

Producer Andy Sneap on Metallica's productions:

Ride the Lightning, for me, was the first album I heard this solid wall of guitars. I think there's four tracks on there and it's almost symphonic on there at times, with the way the solos build up. *Master of Puppets* was taking it a step further, really. Bands started getting this thicker wall of sound, where if you listen to the NWOBHM stuff and *Kill 'em All* as well, unlike the first Megadeth album for instance, it's got a real thin '80s sound, in a way, with trashy cymbals everywhere.

So with *Ride the Lightning*, the sound was getting refined, the bass drums were getting clickier, drums started getting punchier, guitar tones got punchier as well. Before that it was all this mid-range killing you. You listen to some of those NWOBHM albums and if they had a thrash production, they could almost pass as thrash albums, some of them. It was everything slowly taking a step up with the production. Obviously we were still working on tape way back until about ten years ago, and then the whole ProTools side of things came in. I say that players back then really had to learn the craft. They really had to learn how to play, whereas now there's a lot of tricks in the studio where people can get away with a pretty half-assed job, to be honest.

Elektra A&R rep Michael Alago on how Metallica's first success changed thrash:

I didn't care because I felt I had the best band, I don't know, like a lot of people got away with murder. Like after I signed Metallica, everybody was getting signed. Everybody wanted something that sounded like that. I mean, there are a lot of great bands out there, but a lot of people played follow the leader, when they saw that Elektra was taking that chance.

But a lot of bands, great bands came out of that whole period. *Peace Sells* came out; *Reign in Blood* came out. I mean, there are so many records that I ended up loving them and thinking, this has nothing to do with… I mean, we all loved and grew up with Iron Maiden and Judas Priest and Black Sabbath and Deep Purple and Ozzy, but all this new stuff, in a weird way, I don't want to say had nothing to do with that, because it was very informative to those bands who did listen to all that stuff, but it was just something so

fucking new and fresh and different and loud. And it was a little bit of punk, a little bit of thrash, a little bit of old school, and if you are any good at all, you used all those references, like Metallica did, and you called that your own thing.

September 14 – 28, 1985. Celtic Frost work with producer Horst Muller at Casablanca Studios in Berlin, Germany, on material for their debut full-length.

Fall 1985. Flotsam and Jetsam issue their *Iron Tears* and *Metal Shock* demos. A homemade video is produced for the track "Hammerhead."

October 1985

October 1985. Guelph, Ontario, Canada's Razor issue their second album, the Walter Zwol-produced *Evil Invaders*. The record is recorded at Phase One Studios in Toronto.

October 1985. Living Death issue their second album, *Metal Revolution*, recorded once again using Axel Thubeauville as producer, working at Horus Sound Studio in Hannover, Germany.

October 1985. Kreator issue their debut, *Endless Pain*, on Noise Records, deciding on the new band name during the sessions.

October 3 – 31, 1985. Venom mount the second leg of their World Possession tour. Exodus serves as support, with Atomkraft included on many of the dates. These shows are Exodus' first European dates of their career.

October 7, 1985. Anthrax issue "Madhouse" as the advance single from their forthcoming second record.

October 11 – November 17, 1985. Voivod record what is to be their second album, *Rrroooaaarrr*.

Voivod drummer Michel Langevin:

For the *Rrroooaaarrr* album, we had moved to Montreal in '85 and we were really poor. Because we didn't have a label, after *War and Pain*. We tried to move on to other labels, and it was quite difficult, and everybody seemed to wonder what we were. As a band, there was nothing like that. And for a year we were living in Montreal, the four of us, in a small apartment. We were rehearsing in a really dangerous place full of gangs and it was crazy (laughs).

And I started painting the *Rrroooaaarrr* cover on a piece of cardboard, although I didn't have to do that. It was really stupid (laughs), but I did it anyway. It couldn't have been that expensive to buy a canvas, but somehow I was too poor and I did it on the cardboard (laughs). And one of my friends was an artist, and he was so insulted. He's like, "Man, you're doing a cover for an album that is

distributed internationally on a chunk of cardboard?!" He's the one that for *Killing Technology*, made me a frame with a canvas to paint on, just to make sure I wouldn't do that on a piece of cardboard also. So it's really like cardboard with acrylic again.

But yes, we were in an almost dilapidated building, and the walls were not properly built, and there was not enough cement, and the guy who built the jam space for the band did it with bricks that were not stuck together, so you could actually push the top of the wall down and go into the jam space, and we got robbed like that in '85, soon after moving in. And they held punk shows and metal shows, thrash shows and hardcore shows, and there was no security, and there were a lot of fights between punks and skinheads and metal kids, and with absolutely nobody to control it. Anything could happen. It was pretty heavy, that spot. But it was the only jam space available for hardcore and thrash metal bands.

There was a floor where they would have hardcore shows, but really unorganized with no security and lots of fights; it was quite insane. But it was really the only thing we could afford. Because we were all on welfare, and back then welfare was $153 a month (laughs), and there was really nothing you could do. I remember most of the times we would eat a burger and French fries on the first day of the paycheck, you know, and for the rest it was Kraft Dinner. And that was it. And that's why I ended up painting on a piece of cardboard.

October 27, 1985. Celtic Frost issue their landmark debut full-length, *To Mega Therion*. As with Venom and Bathory, Celtic Frost quickly become inspirational for those who would dare make extreme metal, be that black metal, death metal or thrash.

Tom Warrior on *To Mega Therion*:

We felt confident enough to go one step further, and really hit on the experiments and everything. We knew *Morbid Tales* had given us a course, but we wanted to expand on that course massively. It's basically not the same as the first two Frost albums. It's extremely dark and unusual in places, as far as some of the instruments used, as well as some of the ideas that we used at the time. It's also the first album where Reed is fully integrated and is a major and important part of the band.

Of course, the album also has a key role in our history because of the artwork provided by H.R. Giger. I don't know if he was a big fan, but we approached him with samples of our music and we sent him our lyrics and everything, and we told him that we felt our music, in a very small way, represented the same atmosphere as his paintings did. He obviously felt the same way because we actually asked him for one painting for the cover, and he offered us a second painting, because he

felt, obviously, that the connection was really there. He offered us a second painting, and we didn't have to pay for either of the paintings.

As for the title, it is a social statement. It means the great beast. And to us, we meant mankind. We were always of the opinion that good and evil wasn't created by religion or anything else. It's created in our heads. Everybody makes their own decision to either go down the good path or a bad one. And the way mankind has been on this planet for, I don't know, the last 40,000 years, it's pretty much the great beast to us.

October 30, 1985. Anthrax issue their second album, *Spreading the Disease*. It is the first record for vocalist Joey Belladonna and bassist Frank Bello. It is also the first for the band's deal with Island Records, after a debut and an EP that were purely Megaforce offerings.

Megaforce Records founder Jonny Zazula:

Anthrax was a very weird story. I called up Chris Blackwell and I said, "I have something for you that I want you to listen to." And he knew that I was the authentic metal guy, because he always deals with the authentic reggae guy or the authentic Latin guy. And so I brought it up to his hotel room, believe it or not, one morning, the Anthrax demo, and what basically happened was, he listened to it, and he just looked at me and says, "Jonny, just tell me—is this the real thing?" (laughs). And I told him, "It doesn't get any more real than this." And I played him "God Save the Queen" and he said, "Oh, this is great."

So we signed a separate Megaforce deal with Island. Now, we were doing, before Cliff and Peter came in, we were also getting ready to do a separate deal for Metallica with Elektra. So that sort of got taken over. At that point we wanted to get our bands on majors, and manage them rather than do the record company. That was our plan, and then Doug Morris saw Anthrax get away, and he said, "You know what? We want them all!" So we did the Megaforce/Atlantic Records deal. In general though, Metallica was first, but there was some Anthrax going on a little bit, and there was a lot of Raven going on. So there was a lot of action then. Anthrax basically was someone, just, like I said, "Jonny, if this is the real deal, I want it."

But it wasn't easy. We went into Arista Records—I'm not going to say who the guy was there—and we went with the Anthrax record and he put it in the thing. He was really brave; he turned the volume all the way up and this guy was going to listen to Anthrax. And he put it on and it was so intense for him that he killed his ears and he asked me to please turn it off. He couldn't take it whatsoever, and that's a true story about Anthrax. But they of course went to Island Records, and Raven, we signed them to Atlantic Records. Unfortunately we parted with Raven due to the fact that our partner at the management company at the time, he went with Raven.

A conversation I remember very well; there's a very wonderful fellow in the business named JR, Jeff Rollins. He used to be a real power ranger and now he does Broadway and all kinds of good things. Anyway, he stopped me. He came up to me at the show at the Roseland Ballroom and he said, "Jonny, you gotta manage one. You can't be there for all three. They're going to get jealous; they're going to hate you." There was truth to that and when it ended up who you were going to run with, Marsha and I were managing Anthrax.

Anthrax guitarist Scott Ian on the Roseland Ballroom show that advanced the careers of Anthrax as well as Metallica and Raven:

It was the last show of the Raven Anthrax tour; that was our first tour and we were supporting *Fistful Of Metal*. And the last show was at Roseland Ballroom in Manhattan, and it was going to be Raven, Metallica and Anthrax. Metallica got added to that bill. And we sold it out, which at the time was kind of unheard of, to sell out 3500 tickets or whatever it was. Three indie bands. None of us were on major labels; we were all on Megaforce.

It was a huge night for all of us, because for us, a New York band, getting to play in front of that many people in our hometown

was insane. It was like, "Wow, look mom, we made it." Granted we weren't making a dime, but still. I got to play that show and then go home and sleep at my mom's house.

But it was amazing. It was incredible to get onstage and open our show with "Deathrider" and see 3000 kids all headbanging. It was kind of the culmination of, for us, three years of hard work to that point. So many lineup changes and just busting our asses and trying to make this happen and rehearsing seven nights a week and trying to make this happen and then standing on a stage in Manhattan and looking out at that sea of people who knew our music and bought our record and were singing the words to our songs. We couldn't believe it. It was insane. It was unheard of.

And every label showed up that night, and Raven got their deal with Atlantic, and Metallica got their deal with Elektra. We were still on Megaforce. We didn't get a deal yet. Though we got scouted that night, it took a couple more months for us to get signed. But we did get signed because of that night because the people from Island had seen us and then it just took a couple of months until the deal got done. But yeah, you could basically say all three bands signed their major deals from playing that Roseland show.

We never expected an Elektra deal. It was never in the cards for us. We always knew at some point, when things started to blow up a little bit. And Jonny Z certainly had some shit going on, with managing us and Metallica and Raven at the time. But yeah, it was after that show, with everyone getting scouted. It was kind of a big deal, the fact that these unknown underground bands could actually sell out the show.

And so it was after that show that Raven signed to Atlantic and Metallica signed to Elektra. Our deal came about six months later. A couple other labels were sniffing around, but Island were the most serious about it, and kind of stayed on it. It wasn't Chris Blackwell who officially signed us. He owned the label, but I can't remember who the actual president or the A&R person at the time, when we signed, with Island. But Chris Blackwell had to put his stamp on it obviously.

Anthrax drummer Charlie Benante on *Spreading the Disease*:

I think it was one of those records that was on the cusp of that whole thrash metal explosion that was going to happen the following year, and I think that was one of the records that was, you know, leading the charge. We started to go to a lot of shows back in '84. And I just think all of those elements, really, you know, just put it in a pot and cook it up, and we came up with this record. I mean, a lot of that *Spreading the Disease* record is, you could view it as coming from

the New Wave of British Heavy Metal; there's a lot of elements of that type of music in that record. But then there's another element of speed, thrash, and what was to come.

The funny thing about that record is the last song that was recorded for it was a song that I had way later, even after the record was done recording. I had another song, which turned out to be the song "A.I.R.," and that was the last thing that we recorded for that record. It's pretty funny how it's one of those moments where the record kind of took a different shape, and you could see where we were going with the next record, which would become *Among the Living*.

I think our first album, we were newbies to the whole thing. I mean, some of us had been in a recording studio maybe once or twice prior to that. So our first album, we were really inexperienced and it was a learning experience. So going into that second album, it was what not to do that we did on the first album. And I remember thinking, the first album, okay, it's our first album, but I always felt that it didn't really sound like us. I wanted *Spreading the Disease* to sound more like us.

And you have to remember, another thing, going into the studio up there, we didn't have a singer. So we just had the songs, and Scott took over the lyric department, and I took over more of the songwriter, the music, you know. So it was a strange time and also a really good time. And like I said, it was a learning experience. We wanted to work with Carl again, because we did have a good vibe with him, and I think he wanted to maybe make some corrections from the first album, with us.

So we went up to Pyramid Sound, up in Ithaca. We loved Alex Perialas; we liked his whole vibe in his studio. So we went back up there, and we set up and just started to make a record. That record took a long time to make. And then we had a singer that didn't work out, and then Carl knew of this guy, which turned out to be Joey Belladonna. Joey was singing in a band up there called Bible Black, I believe. And Joey came down and he sang a little bit, and then that was it. We loved him.

But was almost like he was just thrusted into it. What we did was, we took a break from recording and we did this two-week bunch of dates on the east coast. And I remember Joey was like, whoa, I've never experienced something like this, you know. Stage-diving at all that stuff. It was a totally new environment for him. But he enjoyed it and we enjoyed it. You know, we were just five young guys, just out on tour and learning about each other, and yeah, we all got along. It was going great. So there was no problems.

As for the songs on that record, like I say, "A.I.R." was always one of my favourite songs, and it's still a crowd favourite. We play it to this day. And it takes me back to the time when we were just writing those songs. Like I said, that song was a last-minute addition to the record. I remember making a demo, and I was sending it to those guys up in Ithaca, and then they called me, "Yeah, this is great; we need to record this!" So I went back up to Ithaca, set up the drums again, and we recorded "A.I.R.," and it was such a good song that it ended up being the first song on the record. That's one of my favourite songs on the record, because it has a story behind it.

Another one was "Gung Ho," which was written basically somewhere on tour, for the first album. And I remember we wanted that song to just be so ferocious and fast. And that's probably the fastest double kick recorded too. I think that was before "Reign in Blood" and a lot of those other songs that had fast double kick. So that's when we totally took it up a notch. And I remember playing it live, we just played it faster than the record. Sometimes it was just a blur.

Anthrax vocalist Joey Belladonna:

When I got into the band, I had no idea who they were and I didn't even know their music, so I was taking a shot thinking that maybe we would be decent. Even before I joined Anthrax, I didn't have any expectations. I just wanted to be in a good band and play good music. I knew they were talented and I knew they were really good musicians, so I was happy to be in that band. I knew that maybe over some time we could be successful and we really had to spend some time to get to where we are, as we're not a commercial band. Obviously, we have our own way of being commercial, but we're not a commercial type of band.

I'm happy that what we've done is accessible. But "The Big Four," oh my God! Who knows when that becomes The Big Four and who judges that sort of stuff? Obviously we've been around for a while and have played a big part in the world of metal music to get to say that we're a part of The Big Four. And whether anyone's debating on those four bands known as The Big Four… I don't know, man.

Anthrax bassist Frank Bello on *Spreading the Disease*:

Here it is, I'm going to tell you. It's a scrapbook of my life where you can open it and look at pictures and you can see we're having fun. When I look at that record, you gotta realize this. This was my… I did the EP with Anthrax—that was my first record. The microscope of recording was on me and I was very, very nervous. So remember I came from my bedroom into a studio and it scared the shit out of me.

You could hear it in "Lone Justice;" that was the first song I recorded on that. I was so nervous starting to record. Carl Canedy, he saw my hand shaking, he pulled me inside in the kitchen and he goes, "Have a shot of whiskey." We had a shot and so I simmered down and you can hear all my influences in that. Steve Harris, Geddy Lee, Geezer Butler… they were all in that song. I didn't know what else to rely on, so they were all in that.

But that I remember in a really fun way, because that was the start of my musical career. I'm off from high school, 18 years old. So 18 years old, I'd graduated high school six months early, I double up on my credits. I stayed after school to double my credits to get in the band Anthrax, to tour. I graduated, I didn't go to college—it was either Anthrax college or college. So I took the Anthrax route, and it's been a good one.

Anthrax producer Carl Canedy on falling into production:

I was always interested; from early on when I got two tape recorders, two mono-tape recorders, and recorded one to the other. I was always interested in recording; I was always interested in writing and so when we first started the Rods albums, a lot of times David Feinstein and I were the only ones in the studio—we couldn't afford a producer. So, if we were trying a vocal, I would say try it this way or whatever. And we would just be there and we'd work on it together, and I mean that's how we both started producing. Producing ourselves, because you just don't have the money to hire a producer when you are indie. So that was it.

And then I met Jonny Z, and I had been doing some local demos for bands and so Jonny is here, "Hey! You want to try this band?" I said, "Sure." And then that's how we started—it was simple as that. There was no master plan. Jonny was just hot and signing bands left and right and he needed producers. And so he was giving me different projects.

I did three records with Anthrax. When I first started working with Anthrax a lot of my friends laughed. Some said, "These guys are going to be gold!" and one friend, he goes, "They are the worst band ever; have you seen them? You are puttin' your balls on the fire." I said, "Yeah. I have no doubt they are going to be successful band." They're like, "You are fucking crazy. That sucks."

So at the end of the day… But early on it was the changing of the guard for that type of music and not everybody got it at first. Jonny had signed bands, obviously Metallica, Anthrax, those bands, and they were the cutting edge that was changing of the guard. We were just talking about James Hetfield. Who would think that in the '80s when Metallica's first album came out, that James Hetfield would influence singers? How many singers today sound like James Hetfield, vocalist? It's surprising.

Lamb of God drummer Chris Adler on the pioneering of double bass drum work in metal:
In the way that I know it and when I first sat down and wanted to play double bass, probably Charlie Benante from Anthrax. *Spreading the Disease* was an album that really showcases that thing. Of course people evolved it from there and did different thing with it, but that was the first time I heard it in the context of metal drumming. Of course Gene Krupa has two bass drums, but it was never in that metal form where you're just punching people in the face as fast as you can. So yeah, it's probably Charlie Benante.

In Flames guitarist Bjorn Gelotte:
Listen to most of the Anthrax albums, they have great production, chunky guitars, the drums sound great, but there's only a limit to how much you can do with that, before bands start sounding more and more the same. Nowadays you can do a lot of things in the studio. I think that a lot of bands want to make their singers speak for them. I don't know how you say that in English, but every guitar player has their sound, every band has their sound, and the less you do in the production, the more you can hear the actual musician. I don't know if it's wrong to do it, but it's a way of making it sound real. I don't know if I like it, but I can guess that's why Anthrax did it.

Late 1985. Denmark's Artillery issue their *Fear of Tomorrow* debut, on Neat Records.

Late 1985. Hamburg, Germany speed merchants Iron Angel issue their debut, *Hellish Crossfire*, on Steamhammer.

November 1985

November 1985. Pre-Type O Negative band for Pete Steele, Carnivore, issue their self-titled crossover thrash debut, for Roadrunner Records.

November 1985. Crossover thrashers Hirax, led by California metal legend Katon W. De Pena, issue their debut, *Raging Violence*, on Metal Blade.

November 17, 1985. Anthrax issue "Armed & Dangerous" as the second single from their *Spreading the Disease* album. With the successful and well-regarded *Spreading the Disease*, Anthrax has their classic that gives them entry into the ranks of The Big Four, delivering a great record before Slayer and Megadeth, but after Metallica.

November 30, 1985. The Palladium in Montreal hosts the historic World War III festival, also known as Le Festival International de Heavy Metal. On the bill are Voivod, Celtic Frost, Destruction, Nasty Savage and Possessed.

Nasty Savage guitarist Ben Meyer:

We had a great tour that was probably the career highlight, I'd say. I got to play with the Frost, Voivod, Possessed and Destruction at the World War III concert in Montreal. I remember, your beer is a lot stronger. I got shit-faced and I was puking by the end of the gig next to the tour bus, thinking I had the time of my life. I remember that label in Canada pirated the album, sold a shitload of them, never gave us a dime. I heard about him, but never got a dime out of it.

But live, Ronnie is pretty fucking crazy. I mean, he'll smash TVs. There's something about when we gets... he ain't really into practicing, but when it comes to the show, he really gets crazy. He throws TVs up in the air and they land on his chest, starts bleeding all over the place, he's fucking crazy. And it's real too, it ain't no bullshit fake blood. I saw him about a week after the gig we played up in Chicago and his fucking leg had a bruise on the size of the cantaloupe (laughs). There was this one gig, they said, "Y'all gotta go on right now, right now!" "Man," he goes, "Right now?" He had to piss. "Y'all gotta be on right now." "Right now?" And he started pissing right in his fucking pants (laughs). He's... he don't give a fuck.

Destruction vocalist and bassist Schmier:
Of course we liked Voivod. We all started around the same time and we've known the guys for a long time and we like them of course. I think it's great that those roots will always be there, with Voivod, Slayer, Exodus, Testament. I still like their old and their new music and for that reason it inspires you. It's nice that some of those bands are coming back again or are still around. One of the wildest things was the World War III festival in Montreal which was the first time we met Voivod and Possessed and Nasty Savage and Celtic Frost. And of course the first time in America was fantastic. I met my girlfriend there, the Canadian one, we were together for a couple of years. But it was very wild.

Celtic Frost vocalist and bassist Tom Warrior on the old days:
I remember our very humble beginnings, and it's always been difficult for me to accept that we influenced anybody. We started with such a small operation. We had no money, we had no technical abilities, no nothing. That we built the band out of this is a miracle in itself, so we never forget about these beginnings. It's very difficult for us to accept that bands are influenced by us. I listen to some albums and I think those are fantastic, and I wish we could sound like that; I wish we could play like that. It's astonishing that people come to us and say, "You are the ones." It's just very difficult for us to accept.

Voivod drummer Michel "Away" Langevin on his legendary guitarist:
Piggy was one of a kind and I know that I would never expect another musician to write Piggy's music. Never. I played with Piggy for 25 years, since 1980 'till 2005, and there is a reason why I wrote drum parts for his guitar parts. To me, he was just the greatest contemporary composer and I just wanted to write drum parts on his music. I was always blown away by his music, and I would never dream of meeting another Piggy in my life. I was lucky, and it was 25 years, it's already quite lucky that I was able to share this experience with him.

Voivod vocalist Snake:

I remember playing with Possessed, these guys were young. So were we but... but the Possessed singer, Jeff, he was a pretty wild guy. I remember getting drunk with this big boot, like this big glass of beer. Those days were insane. We were driving all the time, driving, playing, driving, playing, no sleep, we didn't have a lot of comfort, but it was so wild and so kicking. It was almost like you didn't need to sleep, because it was too fun (laughs).

But I remember at one point, we did a show in Quebec, in a small, small town. It was almost like a neighborhood party. I said, "What the hell are we doing here?" There was a stage that looked like one

of those floating boats, but we were on the grass. And we were in the middle of a clean neighbourhood. It was a city of about 2000 people, and it was like a chapiteaux, like a big tent, and there was a pole right in the middle of the stage. It looked almost like a circus, with a really low stage. And when we got there, the skull, the black skull, it looked like a pirate boat, and we said who's going to come to this show? And from everywhere they came, from Quebec, from Montreal, from in between, and in that small place, there were about 2000 people, packed in under that tent.

And at one point, the kids were climbing the pole that holds the tent, and the pole was waving, and we were screaming and they were waving the pole and I was saying to myself, "Jesus Christ, the whole thing's going to fall down!" And there was no security, one policeman in the whole town, and it was funny, but at that time there was no law, basically around events.

And besides us there were mostly like punk bands, kids in the neighborhood. This was 1985, around *Rrroooaaarrrr*. We actually took our shower, we got a meal and we had a BBQ out there with people we didn't know. They just offered us the showers, "Here's my house; do whatever you need to do. If you're hungry, we've got a BBQ set up." It was nice, and people were very cool.

December 1985

December 1985. Exciter work once again with producer Guy Bidmead at Britannia Row Studios in London on tracks for their forthcoming fourth album. In the meantime, simultaneously, Music for Nations in the UK issue the band's *Feel the Knife* EP.

December 1, 1985. Sepultura makes their debut with the *Bestial Devastation* EP, on Cogumelo Records.

Sepultura vocalist and bassist Max Cavalera: The ideas come from my background. I can't change my childhood that was all fucked-up. I can't change the fact that I lost my father when I was nine and they moved me to a

military school. All that is fuckin' forever with me. It's anger forever; it won't change. It's like if someone cut your arm off, it won't change. When it comes to writing music and lyrics, it all comes back to all that, together with society today. I don't find it hard to write music and lyrics.

December 31, 1985. Metallica close out '85 with a bang, playing a hometown show with Exodus and Slayer.

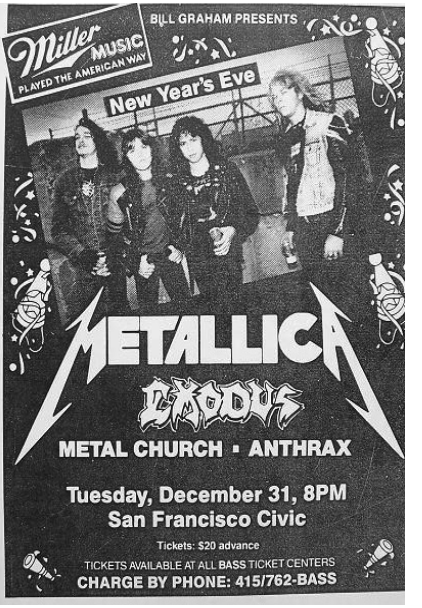
1986 — "There's no way we're going to be on the radio, so why even try?"

I've chosen this book to end in October 1986 for the crucial event that happens that autumnal month, namely the release of Slayer's *Reign in Blood*. But Slayer's Slaytanic assault is only one reason that many thrashers posit 1986 as the genre's golden year.

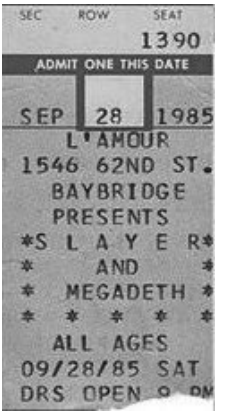
But before we build that case, let's celebrate the continued beehive-thrive of the B-league, shall we? Good. Well, clap hands for records in 1986 by the likes of Whiplash, Agnostic Front, Bulldozer, Mortal Sin, The Accused, Exciter, Crumbsuckers, Sacrifice, Raven, Heathen, Razor, Iron Angel, Tankard, Cryptic Slaughter, Piledriver and Hirax, each to their own, some leaning metal, leaning punk, all thrusting a middle finger at hair metal.

Up the food chain, German thrash is well represented in 1986, with Destruction's *Eternal Devastation* plus the debut from Sodom, namely *Obsessed by Cruelty*. Voivod continue to lead the Canadian contingent (noted above, we got a fourth Exciter record, plus albums from Razor and Slaughter), with their second album *Rrroooaaarrr* (already a pain in the ass to spell, I refuse to include the gratuitous umlauts). And then also significant from a middle tier point of view, June 1986 gives us Flotsam and Jetsam's *Doomsday for the Deceiver* debut, and gritty, snarling, punk-infected easterners Nuclear Assault also debut with *Game Over*.

But yes, but yes, back to the reason why so many gosh darn angry metalheads love 1986. Early in the year, Metallica delivered their third album, *Master of Puppets*, which in many people's ten-foot pole positions, is the greatest thrash album of all time. Later in the year, Metal Church delivered *The Dark*, also considered a fine, fine record. But more importantly, Megadeth kept fighting against adversity, offering their well-regarded second album, *Peace Sells… But Who's Buying?*. And then, as already given away, Slayer finally found their special purpose, unleashing upon the world *Reign in Blood*, 28 minutes of thrash crossing over into nascent death metal, speed that kills, rabid crowds at the ready.



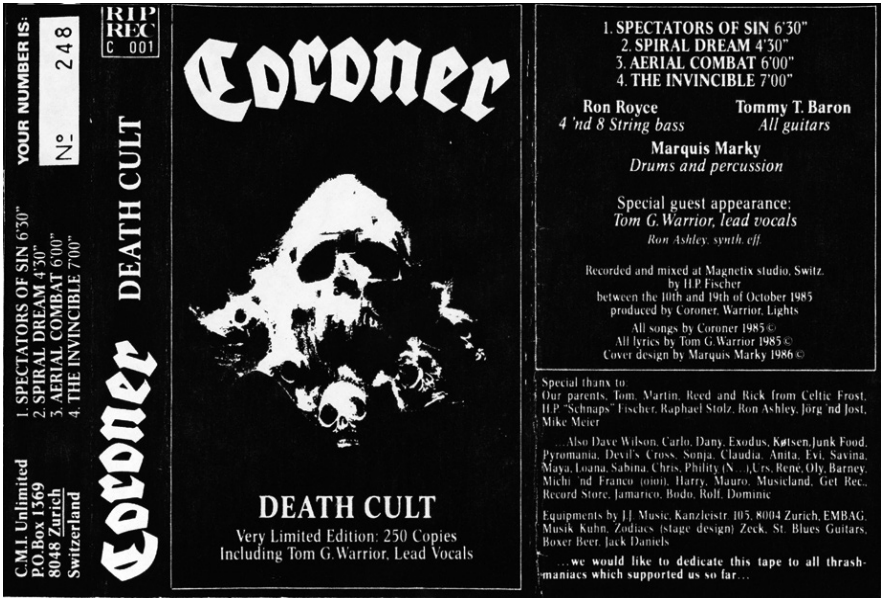
Finally, 1986 must be remembered for tragedy as well, with the death of Metallica's Cliff Burton in a horrible tour bus accident in Sweden. It's hard to imagine Metallica achieving more than they would in the ensuing years. But one can conjecture, given the way anybody who talks about Cliff quickly gets onto admiring how musical he is, that Metallica would have likely repeated the sense of creative triumph that they demonstrated with *Ride the Lightning* and *Master of Puppets*, had Cliff lived and the classic lineup continued. We of course will never know, given this sad and tragic chapter in the history of thrash.



1986. Chicago's Wrath issue their debut, *Fit of Anger*, on Medusa Records. Cheap Trick and Trouble have competition.

1986. Vio-lence issue two four-track demos. Bay Are thrash continues to exhibit bench strength.

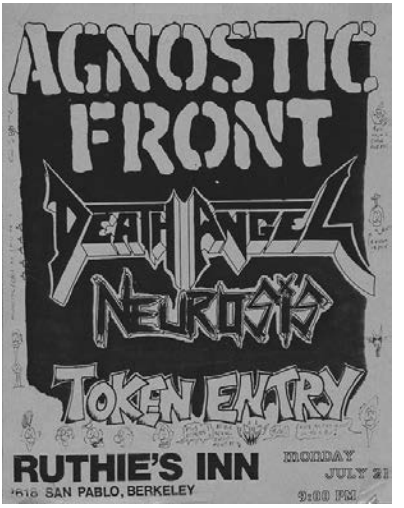
1986. Switzerland's Coroner, formerly roadies for Celtic Frost, issue a demo called *Death Cult*. Celtic Frost's Tom G. Warrior is the vocalist. Coroner would go on to represent an intensely artistic and creative arm of Teutonic thrash, an area also inhabited by the likes of Mekong Delta.


RIP REC C 001
YOUR NUMBER IS:
N° 248
1. SPECTATORS OF SIN 6'30"
2. SPIRAL DREAM 4'30"
3. AERIAL COMBAT 6'00"
4. THE INVINCIBLE 7'00"
C.M.I. Unlimited
P.O.Box 1369
8048 Zurich
Switzerland
Coroner
DEATH CULT
Coroner
DEATH CULT
Very Limited Edition: 250 Copies
Including Tom G.Warrior, Lead Vocals
1. SPECTATORS OF SIN 6'30"
2. SPIRAL DREAM 4'30"
3. AERIAL COMBAT 6'00"
4. THE INVINCIBLE 7'00"
Ron Royce
4 'nd 8 String bass
Tommy T. Baron
All guitars
Marquis Marky
Drums and percussion
Special guest appearance:
Tom G. Warrior, lead vocals
Ron Ashley, synth. eff.
Recorded and mixed at Magnetix studio, Switz.
by H.P.Fischer
between the 10th and 19th of October 1985
produced by Coroner, Warrior, Lights
All songs by Coroner 1985 ©
All lyrics by Tom G.Warrior 1985 ©
Cover design by Marquis Marky 1986 ©
Special thanx to:
Our parents, Tom, Martin, Reed and Rick from Celtic Frost, H.P. "Schnaps" Fischer, Raphael Stolz, Ron Ashley, Jorg 'nd Jost, Mike Meier
...Also Dave Wilson, Carlo, Dany, Exodus, Kætsen, Junk Food, Pyromania, Devil's Cross, Sonja, Claudia, Anita, Evi, Savina, Maya, Loana, Sabina, Chris, Philitty (N...), Urs, René, Oly, Barney, Michi 'nd Franco (oion), Harry, Mauro, Musicland, Get Rec., Record Store, Jamarico, Bodo, Rolf, Dominic
Equipments by J.J. Music, Kanzleistr. 105, 8004 Zurich, EMBAG, Musik Kuhn, Zodiacs (stage design) Zeck, St. Blues Guitars, Boxer Beer, Jack Daniels
...we would like to dedicate this tape to all thrash-maniacs which supported us so far...

1986. Crossfire issue their third album, *Sharpshooter*. It is their third in a row for Mausoleum Records.

1986. Speed metallers Atomkraft issue an EP called *Queen of Death*.

1986. Agnostic Front issue their second album, *Cause for Alarm*, more of a metal-leaning affair for them, on Relativity/Combat. The album was recorded at Systems II, in Brooklyn, NY.



1986. Flotsam and Jetsam make their debut with "I Live, You Die" on *Metal Massacre VI*. Heretic, Juggernaut and Cryptic Slaughter are also featured on the compilation.

1986. Overkill are on board for a view of thrash history, supporting Anthrax on their *Spreading the Disease* tour and Slayer on their *Reign in Blood* tour. The band also play with the likes of Carnivore, Nuclear Assault, Liege Lord, Venom, crossover act D.R.I. and post-punk hardcore legends Black Flag.

METALLYSEE presents
Zaterdag 24 mei 1986
Zaal PERFA
Burst (Aalst) - Oost-Vlaanderen
Aanvang : 19 u. - Deuren : 18 u. - Nabij station
VVK : 300 fr.
Kassa : 350 fr.
Anthrax USA
Overkill USA
Cyclone B
№ 319
Druk. Reynlers - Sleepstraat 114 - Gent - tel. 23 46 03

1986. Australian thrashers Mortal Sin issue their debut, *Mayhemic Destruction*.

1986. Virginia Beach, Virginia's At War issue their debut, *Ordered to Kill*, on New Renaissance Records. The album includes a cover of Motörhead's "The Hammer."

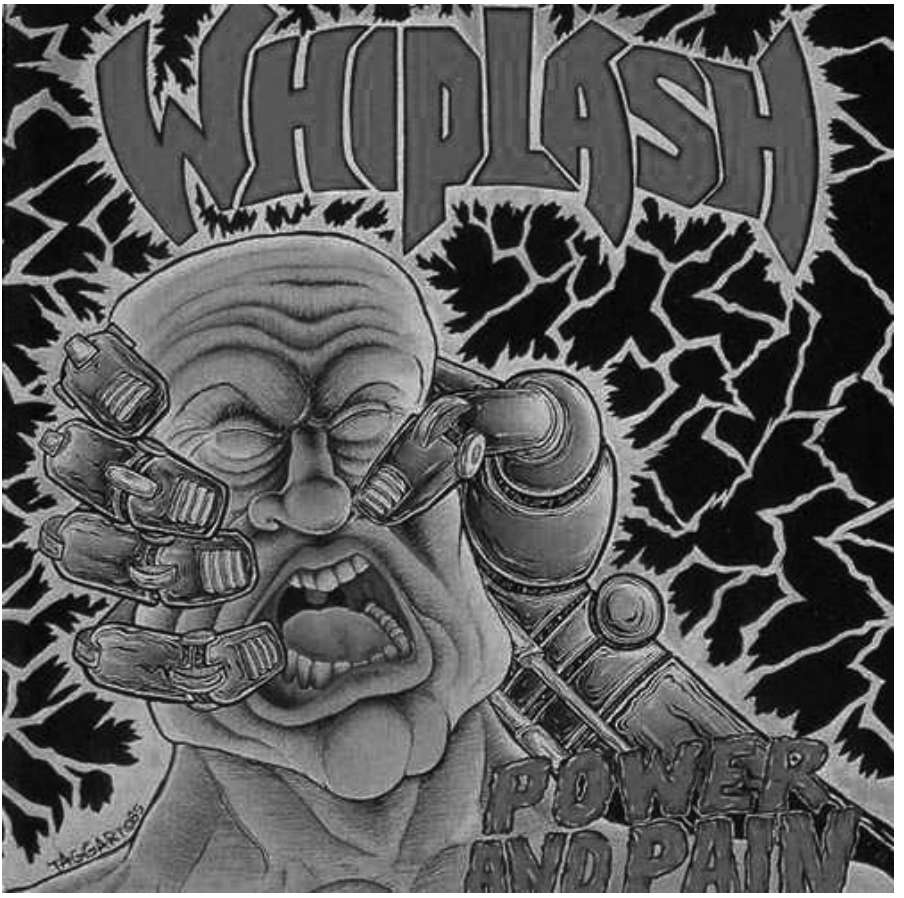
January 1986

January 1986. Seattle crossover act The Accused, in operation since 1980, issue their debut full-length, *The Return of... Martha Splatterhead*.

February 1986

February 1986. Wild rock personality A.C. Wild and his dirty metal power trio Bulldozer issue their second album, *The Final Separation*, which will be their last for Roadrunner.

February 1986. Passaic, New Jersey thrashers Whiplash issue their debut, *Power and Pain*.



February – March 1986. Onslaught work at Matrix Studios in London, UK with Dave Pine on tracks to be used on their forthcoming debut.

> Onslaught guitarist Nige Rockett:
> We're a thrash metal band; what I consider the key things about thrash metal is strong guitar riffs, memorable ones and strong vocal hooks. So we need to keep that kind of element in there because I think that was what old school thrash was about—hooks, great guitar riffs, lots of them and great vocal lines. Back in the beginning stage it was as much aggression but keeping the catchiness put in the music as well. Which is kind of tough. Because it's very easy to go and make some aggressive music that doesn't really go anywhere or remain memorable. So it had to stay clear and very catchy at the same time.

February 13, 1986. "The Enemy" is issued as the third and final single from Anthrax's *Spreading the Disease* album.

February 15 – March 20, 1986. Megadeth work at various studios around LA on tracks that will comprise their second album.

METAL METAL METAL METAL METAL METAL METAL METAL METAL
MEGADETH
PLUS PHOENIX'S HOTTEST
SATURDAY, MARCH 22 - ALL AGES - 4:30 pm
2nd Show - I.D. Required - 7:30 pm - with SURGICAL STEEL
ROCKERS - (3850 West Indian School Road, 269-5715)

> Megadeth bassist Dave Ellefson on his philosophy in Megadeth:
>
> You know, it's interesting, I saw this as a scene, as a movement, because of course around us there were bands like Nuclear Assault and Destruction, a community of bands that were going to just kind of do that one thing forever. That's all they were ever going to do. And I always felt in our band—and I certainly thought Anthrax do it as well—the transitions. And I think that all of us were good musicians, good players, and we learned to play more than just three-chord punk, and we learned to do more than just one or two Judas Priest songs. We were very well-versed players, we had roots and depth that went down much deeper than the music we were playing and writing at that time.
>
> And I think that part of the development was that I certainly felt that with our band, that there was not a glass ceiling—the only one that could put the glass ceiling there was us. Which for me was always why I always encouraged everybody, and was always optimistic about, let's bust through that. Why would you limit yourself? Just as a species, it runs contrary to what we're designed to do. We're designed to be forward-thinking, we're designed to be trying to

reach for the highest possible goal, or anything that we can. It's just how we're wired. And so just to keep yourself in this small box is ultimately to wither and die.

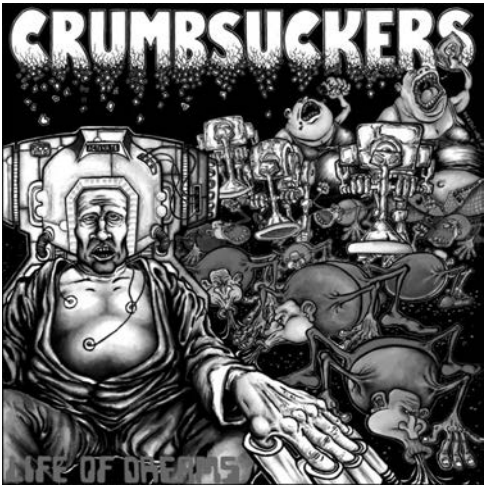
And thrash indeed thrived, in part, due to mainstream outlets like MTV, or maybe major labels, and maybe to some degree even radio—there might be a shred of argument in that (laughs). Because ultimately, the media outlets are always looking for what's the next thing, what can we sink our teeth into next? And to some degree, you want that, because the media can then perpetuate your art and your craft and what you're doing and help to make it more popular.

But you have to be careful that you don't do that only for the fame in itself, that you have to have something solid that is genuine and authentic, and if they take that up and blow that out, then at least you've done it and you've done it the right way. To just go out and seek fame and fortune is putting the cart before the horse. And so I think all of us in thrash were very protective of what we were doing, to the degree that we didn't want to just blow it out and sell it out.

February 22, 1986. Ozzy Osbourne stumbles with his weak and irritating fourth solo album, *The Ultimate Sin*. The door is open to sweep out the deadwood.

Early 1986. Exciter issue their fourth album, *Unveiling the Wicked*. It is the first album with new guitarist Brian McPhee.

Early 1986. Crumbsuckers issue their debut album, *Life of Dreams*, on Combat.



Anthrax guitarist Scott Ian on the value of east coast hardcore for him in the '80s:

By that point, around '85, '86, I was so swamped with Anthrax, that really even, listening to music at the time… Anthrax became this all-encompassing thing for me. So other than like my friends' bands, like Metallica and Slayer and Exodus and Megadeth, and all the shit I grew up with, the '80s for me was a real dead time as far as getting into new music. Because I just didn't have the time. If anything, for most of the '80s, I was listening to hardcore. I was listening to bands like the Crumbsuckers, D.R.I., Corrosion of Conformity and Suicidal Tendencies. I was really into that shit for most of the '80s.

I was certainly listening to a lot of thrash music and a lot of metal, but I just felt like for me, hardcore was like the next step. I was getting into bands like whatever was the most extreme band in '83 or '84, Venom or something like that. Well, what's more extreme than Venom? Well, Suicidal Tendencies or the Crumbsuckers or D.R.I. was more extreme to me. Certainly not on an image level, but on a musical level they were playing faster and more intense. So I was always kind of looking for that next thing.

Thrash behind-the-scenester Markus Payne on the Crumbsuckers: Crumbsuckers were another Combatcore band. They were a little bit too frenetic for me. They were all good guys, cool guys, and they played CBGB probably every like three months, but they moved themselves up. They were doing L'Amour, opening up for Slayer. They were doing the Sundance Inn in Bayshore, Long Island. They just had this really distinct style. It was very choppy for one second, and then it was just obliteration the next second. And to see one of their pits in action, I mean, we're talking when pits were pits. Not a football game like they are now. We're talking when pits were Lower East Side New York pits.

March 1986

March 1986. Canada's Sacrifice issue their debut *Torment in Fire*, adding to the idea that Canada had a bit of a speed metal/thrash scene going, but with material that didn't match up to that of the American bands.

Rob Urbinati on *Torment in Fire*:

We recorded it for like $500. A lot of people consider it a classic album, one of the first death/black metal albums or whatever. A lot of people hold that dear, but I think people got into the raw sound quality when it came out. It's not something you can duplicate; it just had its sound. This was recorded before DAT tape and stuff, and we actually mastered it onto a Beta cassette. We took about two, three days to record it, just banged everything out, mixed it quick and it was done. At the time we were about 17, 18 years old. We were a little sloppy back then, but we had the songs down as best we could.

I think when we started, we fit into the Possessed, Dark Angel type of genre which I would describe as somewhere between thrash and death metal. I've heard people say they've had the same reaction to the *Symbolic* CD, but I think it might be because Death were a similar style to us, from the same old school roots. I think a band like At the Gates or The Haunted could be described in the same way. There are some bands like Entombed or Sepultura where I can hear a Sacrifice influence occasionally, but played a different style.

As far as influences went, on guitar, Tony Iommi, Ty Tabor, Scott Gorham or any Thin Lizzy guitarist, Maiden, Priest, Trouble, Mercyful Fate. I always liked players with more feel than flash, who played memorable riffs and solos. For vocals, I guess I was inspired by Cronos, Paul Di'Anno, Hetfield, Don Doty from Dark Angel. But vocals were always second to me to guitar.

March 1986. Raven issue their fifth album, and second on their deal with Atlantic, *The Pack Is Back*. Unfortunately, the band lose their good reputation for speed metal, and fans blame it on kowtowing to major label pressure to change their image and sound. Neither Anthrax, Metallica nor Megadeth would seem to suffer any ill effects from their major label deals, but Raven is viewed as one of the tragic examples of a great band woefully compromised.

Raven vocalist and bassist John Gallagher on *The Pack Is Back*:
When we started the next album, we really wanted to do really hard accessible songs, which is really a part of what we are. It just got exaggerated too much. And they were being really hard on Eddie Kramer to make it super-commercial. And funny, you listen to that album, and you listen to the album *Turbo* by Judas Priest, and they're almost identical. There's even that same kind of guitar synthesizer that we used, which is wild. And that's because to a point, we were like insulated in this bubble of touring and doing records. I don't think that could even happen these days, with the Internet. You've got such an instant rapport with your audience. But back then, it didn't really matter, because people would say, you know, the album sounds really commercial, but we would do the same stuff live, and it was just killer. And the new stuff was done live with this attitude that wasn't really present on the record.

Megaforce Records founder Jonny Zazula:

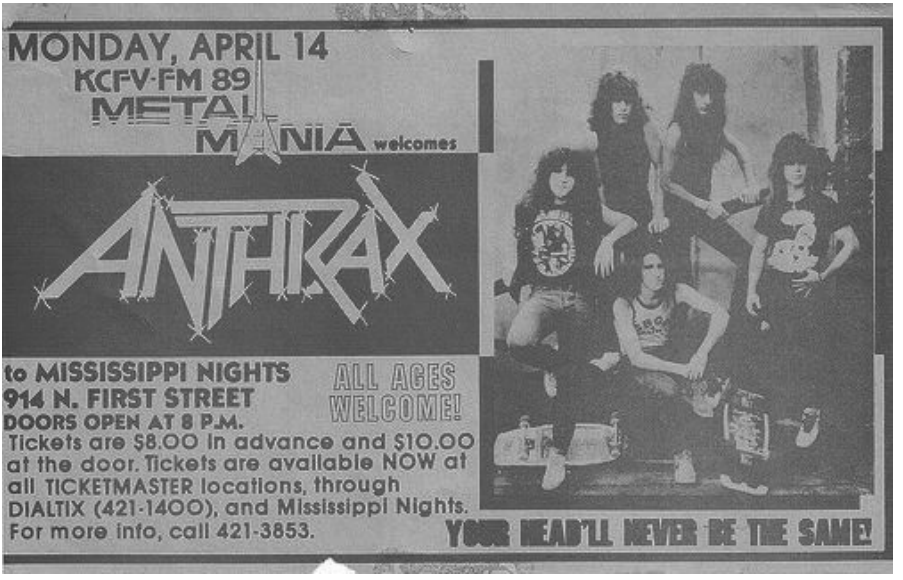
Remember, I was hot on Raven. Raven to me were like everything. You know, what can I say, the clouds and the stars never aligned for Raven. They did a great *Live at the Inferno* with us. I thought that was a very good album, but what happened was, I had a management partner, and we managed Anthrax and Raven. He loved Raven, and I was getting pushed out of Raven, because I was so busy with the record company, with Metallica, with Anthrax. And he pushed me out of Raven, and he made Raven think that maybe they were better off to go with Tony.

And so when they did the video for their first single, on, I think it was "Rock Dogs" or something, their first single on Atlantic, I went in to see them. I saw the Judas Priest stage; they had the whole staging and lighting from Judas Priest, they had all these ramps, and Raven lit up and they were all wearing these costumes.

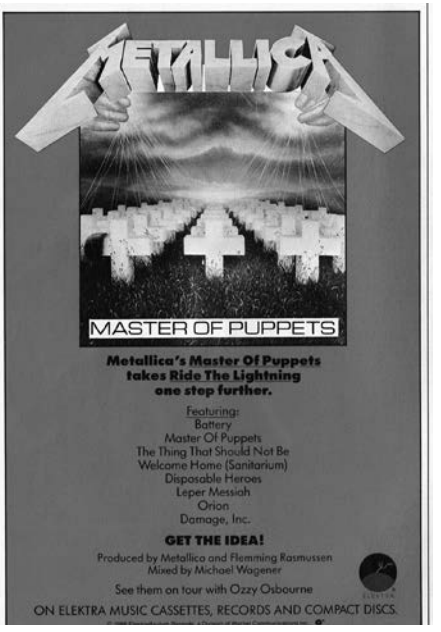
And I said, "What the fuck is this?!" And it led to… believe me, I had the vision; I just didn't have that vision. I had them dressing like the fans, you know, just put some gear on Wacko so he doesn't cut his hand when he hits the cymbals. Well, he used to cut his fingers almost off when he played. I've seen him like get six stitches in a finger, when they were with Judas Priest, and then going back on stage the next day and playing. He was quite a character.

Elektra A&R rep Michael Alago:
John wanted me to do demos and have them be signed to Elektra. So they had a bunch of new material, and so I just funded some demos to see if I wanted to sign them to the label.

March – April, 1986. Anthrax tours the US in support of *Spreading the Disease*, for the first leg, opening for W.A.S.P. and Black Sabbath.


MONDAY, APRIL 14
KCFX-FM 89
METAL MANIA welcomes
ANTHRAX
to MISSISSIPPI NIGHTS
914 N. FIRST STREET
DOORS OPEN AT 8 P.M.
ALL AGES WELCOME!
Tickets are $8.00 in advance and $10.00 at the door. Tickets are available NOW at all TICKETMASTER locations, through DIALTIX (421-1400), and Mississippi Nights.
For more info, call 421-3853.
YOUR HEAD'LL NEVER BE THE SAME!

March 3, 1986. Metallica unleash upon the metal world *Master of Puppets*. The album is considered by many to be the greatest thrash album of all time. And in fact, in the author's 2004 book, *The Top 500 Heavy Metal Albums of All Time*, the ranking of which was derived from a massive poll, *Master of Puppets* took the #1 spot—across all heavy metal, not just thrash.



Metallica guitarist Kirk Hammett on *Master of Puppets*:

> The maturity definitely came from Cliff Burton. Because I would say out of all of us, Cliff was the most mature and most kind of grown-up and most accountable. And I think his music had a degree of that, that came through. And so, I would attribute that largely to Cliff's input, for sure.
>
> As far as my contribution goes, my main thing was the verse and pre-verse to "Master." Something I just threw down on a tape in

two minutes one night when I was drunk, in like 1985. Didn't think much of it, you know? And then I gave the tape to Lars and James, and all of a sudden they turned it into something that was a stop/start thing, whereas when I played it, it was just 4/4, 4/4. They took the verse and they made it kind of a stop/start thing, and then the pre-chorus part (sings it), they went into halftime. Whereas those two pieces, when I played it, it was 4/4 time. And so there you go. The beauty of collaboration.

But there's a super-heavy riff in "The Thing that Should Not Be" (sings it), "Fearless wretch," the fearless wretch riff? I love that riff; I love playing it. I just woke up one day, grabbed my guitar and that fucking riff came out, and I was just like, whoa (laughs). And it came to very good use.

But that record, we were better musicians, we had played more together, we had played live a lot, did a European tour and an American tour, on *Ride the Lightning*. We were growing as people. All that, all those factors, were being thrown into the mix. We were improving, we were progressing, and *Master of Puppets* is kind of like a flood mark on our way up, you know? On our way up to wherever we were going at that time. It got kind of derailed when we lost Cliff, but we managed to build it back up again. But by then, we were on a different upward trajectory because Cliff wasn't there. The dynamic was different.

A&R executive Mike Gitter on *Ride the Lightning* and *Master of Puppets*:

Those records were phenomenal. If you listen to them, you're capturing a band that was just full of fire, full of energy, that wrote great songs, that wrote incredible riffs, that just did not give a shit. And they didn't give a shit in the biggest and best possible way. They set the standard. It's an often-used phrase, but I think it really applies to those two records—they really speak to a generation. The themes on those records were very unique for what was going on at the time. Nuclear war, capital punishment… these were topics you'd hear on a Discharge record. It just really applied to people's day-to-day lives. You also had "Sanitarium" and "Fade to Black" for the ladies. So you got bludgeoned *and* you got your heart strings pulled. These were just immense, honest records.

And from thrash in general, the point was that the rules, or what was the culture of hair metal at the time, they didn't apply in thrash. That didn't apply to us normal dudes who worked crappy jobs in stock rooms or gas stations or sold insurance. They want to hear records that apply to them and apply to what they felt, music that was honest for them.

If you look at the film *The Decline of Western Civilization Part II*, who comes off best in that movie? Dave Mustaine. Because he is the most honest, most realistic and street-level guy who speaks in the entire film, except for Lemmy. Lemmy… that's Lemmy and I can't say anything more. But Mustaine really comes off the best and the most intelligent of anybody in that movie.

Anthrax guitarist Scott Ian on the golden age of thrash, set in motion by *Master of Puppets*:

I think the simple answer is, we were all really great bands and we all became really great songwriters. By the time we all got to our third records—I'm talking about the Big Four bands—by the time we all got to our third records, you could really hear who we were and where we were going as artists and how good things had gotten. Think about *Among the Living*, think about *Master of Puppets*, think about *Reign in Blood*, those are three fucking insane records to think about, and they all came out, what, within a year of each other?

That's a really good time for music. As a guy in a band and as a fan, that's a great time for thrash metal. And that's why it exploded; because we were putting out great records and we were great live bands and we never disappointed. Someone would hear *Among the Living* and tell their friends, "Holy shit, have you heard this?" And someone hears *Master of Puppets* or *Reign in Blood*, "Oh my God, have you heard the new Slayer record?" And it was snowballing. The whole thing was just snowballing.

And this music… once the whole mosh thing started happening, live, it became an outlet that you couldn't get anywhere else. You weren't going to be able to let loose like that, no offense, at a Mötley Crüe show. You weren't able to let loose like that at a Judas Priest show. You couldn't express yourself in that way certainly at a Madonna show.

Against whatever was huge in 1987, that's what we gave. We gave the audience a way to express themselves outside of punk rock and hardcore, which was on a much smaller level at the time; but besides that, nobody else was offering that to the audience. Come to the show, lose your fucking mind, get in the pit and go crazy and stage-dive and have fun. It's not about violence, it's about fun. You're supposed to have fun and let loose. You've had shitty day, a shitty week, a shitty month. Well, come to the Anthrax show, get in the pit, and in two hours that shit is going to roll off your back and you're going to feel pretty good. You might be bruised and really tired the next day, but it's like a great massage; you're going to feel really good afterwards.

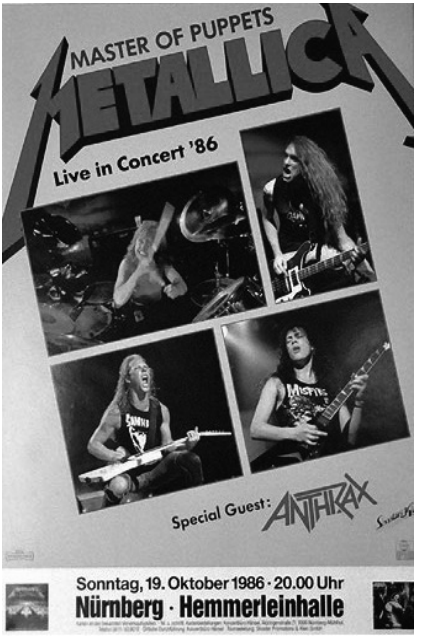
And I think that's what we offered people besides the songs and the energy and the vibe and the performance and the musicianship and all that other stuff. What was happening at our gigs wasn't happening at anyone else's gigs. You couldn't do the Toxic Waltz anywhere but at a thrash show.

I mean, we were absolutely offended by glam, I gotta say. Let's say '87, '88, so I was 24, 25 years old… look, I feel differently about things now because I've grown up, and you look back on your life

and realize a lot of the shit that you used to sweat, it really doesn't fucking matter and it's kind of silly. But at the time it was kind of offensive that we would get lumped in the same category as any glam band. We fucking hated it. The fact that they were calling Poison a metal band… and I don't know if Poison called themselves a metal band. I doubt Poison called themselves a metal band—they were rock 'n' roll—but the fact that the media was calling these bands metal, it drove us fucking crazy because that's not metal.

We were metal. Iron Maiden was metal. That shit that was coming out of LA and anywhere else where you had guys dressing as girls was not fucking metal. And it made us sick. It only made us want to be more fucking violent, more aggressive, bigger assholes, more attitude. Paul Baloff, he coined the phrase back then, "Kill posers," and they'd chant that at shows. We never actually backed going out and beating up people wearing spandex and having poofy hairspray hair, but I certainly never told anyone to not do it, let's put it that way.

So it really mattered back then. It really mattered to us because it felt like people weren't taking us seriously and they weren't listening to what we were doing. If you were writing an article on metal and you were lumping us in with the glam bands, then you never listened to a fucking thing we did. So don't write about us if you haven't listened to us yet. Pay attention, motherfucker. We sound nothing like these other bands. And it definitely was offensive to us—like really offensive to my fucking heart and soul—that anyone would ever lump me in with that kind of music.



Lamb of God vocalist Randy Blythe:

For me, coming from more of the punk rock scene, I wasn't so much of a metalhead. But when I heard *Reign in Blood* and when I heard *Ride the Lightning*, I thought wow, this has the complete aggression of punk but it's technically clean. So it kind of blew the lid off my head when I heard that. Because there are some well-recorded punk bands, but most of the time the production value is rather low and the playing is more about the feel and the aggression than actually the playing.

But when you hear a record like *Master of Puppets*, it's completely aggressive. Still as aggressive as most punk rockers, but it's played so well. So that really opened a new door for me. But if you look at old pictures of Slayer or pictures of Metallica, they have on Misfits, Samhain, Corrosion of Conformity shirts; they were listening to all that stuff as well, but they were just playing it a little bit better.

Elektra Records A&R rep Michael Alago on the ascension of Metallica's career at this point:

Here we are in 1985, 1986 and they've made some great records. At that point in time, after I signed Metallica, it kind of gave other A&R people license to start finding their own Metallica or their own version of that kind of music. So Slayer was being signed, and at one point I wanted to sign Megadeth to Elektra but it would have been too nuts, and of course Dave didn't want to be the little brother band to Metallica at Elektra, so that never happened. What an extraordinary record they made at the time, *Peace Sells*, and Slayer winds up making a classic record, *Reign in Blood*. 1986, Metallica puts out *Master of Puppets*. People sometimes refer to it as the first thrash record, maybe.

I think at that point in time they were growing as artists, so there was definitely a different flavour from *Kill 'em All* to *Ride the Lightning* to this. *Master of Puppets* really was a beautiful combination of old school metal, punk rock, thrash, speed, and it just made for an extraordinary rock album, the likes of which people had never heard before. They were still crazy and young and acting up and drinking, but as you can hear in this record they were totally dedicated to their craft and they were always truthful in their writing, and I think people always responded to that. I think that's what continues to make them extraordinary and what continues to make them bigger and bigger.

I think when we talk about from when cassettes were being traded, to let's go to 1986, I think by that time, all those bands were being talked about in publications. Some of them were being played on Headbanger's Ball, if they had a video on MTV. In 1986 it kind of reached this peak, an exciting peak, because Exodus put out an extraordinary record, then Slayer did, Megadeth, Metallica… But I think the moment in time when I realized it was going to be big was when Metallica put out *Ride the Lightning*. Landmark record. I think that record made all the difference to the records that came out right after that. At that point in time I knew that. But even though I was going to see these other bands, you can't have everybody on one label. So I would up signing Metallica and Metal Church and Flotsam and Jetsam, and that was my contribution.

And then the moment I thought it was going to be over the top huge is when *Master of Puppets* came out. The response was extraordinary. They were opening for Ozzy at 18,000-seat venues and nobody ever saw an opening act like this before. I think from there on in, that was really a big turning point because then we—the record company, we the fans, we the people—knew that by next year they're going to be headlining these venues themselves. And they did, and they always stayed that big.

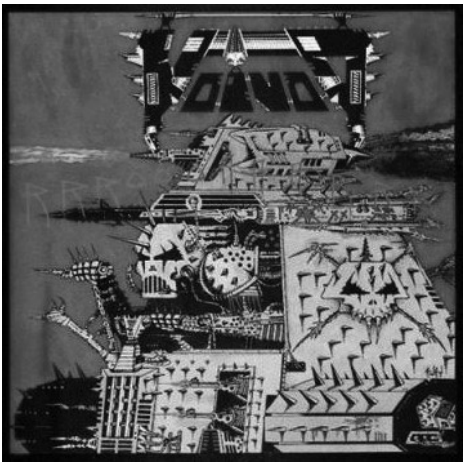
But they had lots of ideas, they wanted to make records and we were there for them. It's about timing and everyone's timing was impeccable. Cliff and Peter wound up signing Metallica as management at the same time that I signed them to Elektra in '84. They were already a management team that was very well respected, so when our chairman heard that Q Prime was going to manage them, we knew they were going to be in great hands.

Between Elektra, myself as the liaison for the band, for the management, all the pieces of the puzzle just fell together beautifully because everyone had respect for each other and everyone did their job brilliantly. I don't say that from an ego perspective, but it was at a point in time where lots of people from the record companies were young and excitable and just wanted to get their records out there.

You know what was fun—because I just looked it up in an old journal—there was a day Cliff came to my apartment in West Village, and we both listened to the acetate of *Ride the Lightning*, when Elektra was getting ready to put that record out here, and we were just both so excited. I think we both knew in the back of our mind that this was a band that was going to be huge.

March 9, 1986. Laaz Rockit hit Europe for the first time, for a handful of dates playing with the likes of Manowar, Motörhead, Exciter and Railway.

March 14, 1986. Voivod issue their second album, *Rrroooaaarrr*.



Voivod drummer Michel "Away" Langevin on the progressive and conceptual nature of the band:

The first couple of albums, we were still learning to play. So it was very raunchy, or harsh. But at the time, thrash metal was so new and exciting. It was all about the energy. The fact that you couldn't play your instruments all that well really didn't matter (laughs). And Blacky, he always had a very distinctive bass sound, that he calls "blower bass." I personally really like when the bass is very audible on an album, like Motörhead, or The Stranglers or even Yes, you know, like Chris Squire.

Anyway we were always very progressive and conceptual. I always liked the way progressive rock just transports you on a voyage, with the mainly longer songs and the interludes between songs. It really helps for the imagery. It's easier to imagine the world you're brought into. Concept albums always felt attractive because if you're into progressive rock and then metal as a teenager, you're probably a bit of a nerd and reading *Lord of the Rings* and stuff like that. As soon as you discover bands that do concept albums, you sort of become a fan of the band quicker. That's my impression. The first Iron Maiden album, when I heard "Phantom of the Opera," I just could not believe it. They became my favourite band in 1980, when the album first came out. Longer songs with a continuing story is always attractive to a young music fan.

And you have to have a bit of discipline to play prog. It's always a challenge of course. When you hear a song that's played very technically, to learn that song is always a challenge and that's an incentive in itself. Also, the openness of the genre. There were ambient bands also that were more groove-oriented, like Magma and stuff like that. That's also something that I find really attractive, the hypnotic tribal style of ambient progressive music.

It's obvious that if you write complicated songs, it's to make it more interesting than pop music. It's probably spectacular, but I found that at the end of the '80s when we were getting really complicated with *Dimension Hatross* and *Nothingface*, it had

become a problem where the music was so complicated, we had to concentrate on our respective instruments and didn't really share with the crowd anymore. That's why we wrote *Angel Rat*, to connect and be able to take it a little easier onstage. There's a balance to be done.

Voivod vocalist Snake:

It's really hard for me to say there are any of the albums that I'm not happy with, but of course, *Rrroooaaarrr* could have sounded better. The production is not great, but then again it's not about the sound itself. I'm pretty happy with all the albums. I think every Voivod album has something interesting in it. A lot of people didn't like *Angel Rat* for some reason, because it's a folk-oriented type thing, perhaps. But that's what we had in mind at the time.

And when you look back, you have to understand that we were different people at different times. Each album has a reason to sound like it sounds. For the first two albums, basically, we didn't have decent equipment and we had no money. We had to deal with what we had, and that's how it sounds—you take it or you leave it. That's how it goes. But when I go back and hear how we sounded, it's not that bad. It's raw and raunchy and all that, but it gives all the attitude that those albums needed. It's more important for me to have an attitude than to have a polished sound.

The Outer Limits, for example, is really well produced. I like it because it's like that, but if you took that sound and applied it to the first album, it would've been like, "Aah, no." Because at that time it was more about punky attitude.

March 27, 1986. Metallica embark upon their Damage Inc. tour, traversing the nation as support for Ozzy Osbourne, a jaunt that brings the band wide exposure.

April 1986

April 1986. Heathen issue their first demo, *Pray for Death*.

April 1986. Destruction work at Studio Hilpolstein on tracks that will comprise their second full-length album.

April 1986. Razor issue *Malicious Intent*, on Viper Records. Iconic, bald Canadian recording artist Walter Zwol returns as producer.

April 1, 1986. Venom's notoriety causes a cancelled gig in Atlanta, Georgia.

STUDIO 54
254 W.54
NYC 10019
Metal Invades Manhattan Every Wednesday
Wednesday March 20
From The U.K.
Tonight
VENOM
POSTPONED TO APRIL 3—TICKETS WILL BE HONORED
SLAYER • EXODUS
Wednesday March 27
ANTHRAX
ANVIL • T.T. QUICK
Wednesday April 3
From England,
First U.S. Appearance
TOKYO BLADE
TROUBLE • FATES WARNING
COMING: WED APRIL 10 KING COBRA
STUDIO 54 IS LOCATED AT 254 W. 54TH ST., N.Y.C. TICKETS ON SALE AT TICKETRON, TELETRON, ROCK 'N' ROLL HEAVEN, CLARK, N.J. AND IT'S ONLY ROCK & ROLL, VILLAGE, N.Y.C.
DOORS OPEN AT 8 P.M. MUST BE 19 OR OLDER
STUDIO 54 — 212-489-7667

Venom drummer Abaddon:

We were warned before we went that America was a touchy Bible-belt country and there would be an extreme reaction to the Satanic thing. We heard about a group of people being outside and that they were getting people to read sections from the Bible and this kind of stuff. And we weren't too bothered by this, but the promoter turned up and things started going really, really weird. He was creating problems for us and we kept having to bring out the contract and saying, "Look, we're just a rock band doing what we do. You know

who you were booking when you booked us. You knew what the band was about." I think he was getting cold feet, was what it was.

But I think the place held maybe 3000, 4000 people, and all the kids were going to turn up. Maybe in the end we just said we weren't going to play. So we pulled out and we pulled back to the hotel where we were and we were on the phone to like solicitors in England and in America to try and see what we could do about it. And we basically just pulled the gig.

But what the promoter did was he went and announced onstage where we were staying. So you get a couple thousand kids who are already drunk and they all jump in their cars, and a lot of people jump in the back of trucks, and they all turn up at the hotel creating absolute mayhem at one or two in the morning. So then the police got called and the police came up to see us, and we wound up in trouble because apparently we incited a riot. We should have just done what we were supposed to do. So it was all a contract we should have done, or he should have done, type of thing. And in the end we just got banned from Georgia.

I'm guessing that what started it was the kind of moral majority who were outside who were objecting to the Satanic thing in their hometown. It's the kind of thing that followed us around America. There were a lot of TV cameras there and a lot of sort of articles in quite mainstream newspapers and magazines. So I think that kind of washed in front, like, this is what's coming. And I think a lot of people got together and went outside and that just created an atmosphere where the promoter… obviously it was his club, and he had to work there the next night and the next night and the next night. So I can kind of see it from his point of view. We weren't prepared to be knocked back on things, so there was all this kind of to and fro, you know?

But these protesters… I wanted to go outside. I wanted to sort of tie my hair back, put on a nice, clean T-shirt, go outside and say, "What is it? What's happening?" And have somebody say, "Oh well it's this band." "Really? Where are they from?" And see if I could get some feedback. And I was told in no uncertain terms that I could do that.

April 14, 1986. Favourite band of thrashers in their misspent youth, namely Judas Priest, commit the ultimate travesty and issue *Turbo*, a hair metal album.

April 26, 1986. D.R.I. record their show at the Olympic Auditorium in LA, which sees video release as *Live at the Olympic*.

May 1986. German thrashers Sodom issue their debut, *Obsessed by Cruelty*, on SPV/Steamhammer in Europe and on Metal Blade in the US. Oddly, there are two completely different recordings of the album for the two territories.

May 1986. Forbidden Evil (soon to be Forbidden) issue their first demo, *Endless Slaughter*.

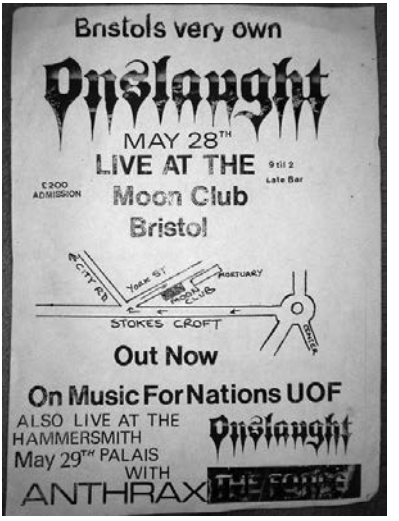
May 1986. Germany's Holy Moses, fronted by female vocalist Sabina Classen, issue their *Queen of Siam* debut, on AAARRG Records.

Holy Moses vocalist Sabina Classen:

The title of the first album was Ramon's idea. His girlfriend was the "Queen of Siam;" she was from Thailand. The work with producer Ralph Hubert was really hard for us, 'cause it was the first time we did a real recording in a studio. So everything was really new for us, and Ralph was a real hard producer. But we learned a lot from him.

As for influences, Andy liked Mekong Delta. I was not such a huge fan of it; I was more into Venom and Possessed. Those songs are great memories about our start, and the fans always like to listen to those songs. But we never will change our foundation sound. It's still raw and full of energy and although the recordings today sound better, I think, our sound is more raw than ever before. The guitar sound in Holy Moses was always special, 'cause with Andy and now with Michael, I had always real great guitar players in the band, with a special sound in the fingers.

May 1986. Onslaught issue their sophomore album, *The Force*. The album appears on Music for Nations imprint Under One Flag, who deal in metal, and more so thrash. *The Force* is the label's debut release. The label would go on to issue 232 releases before closing shop in 1994.



Onslaught vocalist Sy Keeler:
I joined the band in '86, in January 1986 precisely. We recorded *The Force* in March '86 so I was in the band for like five weeks and then we were in the studio. That was a roller coaster, being young and not very level-headed. My first gig was at the original Marquee club in London. For me being a huge music fan of the old school—Zeppelin, Floyd, Hendrix etc.—to walk out on the floors of the Marquee on my first gig, that was pretty awesome. It was incredible. Then the Motörhead tour, being on the road in Europe for a month supporting them, that was pretty amazing too. We learned a few lessons from the masters and they're still teaching the youngsters these days, I'm glad to say.

May 1986. Sabbat release a demo called *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten*, which surprisingly lands the band two pages of press in Kerrang! plus a deal with Noise Records.

Sabbat
Fragments of a Faith Forgotten
FRAGMENTS OF A FAITH FORGOTTEN
SIDE 1
A Cautionary Tale
Hosanna in Excelsis
SIDE 2
For Those Who Died
1 Martin Walkyier-Vocals
2 Andy Sneap-Guitar
3 Frazer Craske-Bass
4 Simon Negus-Drums
A very special thanks to Glynn for doing a really good job on the recording, producing and mixing side of things. Also thanks to Rob for the
A very special thanks to our loyal roadies Steve, Dandy, Ian and Gassy.
This tape is dedicated to all who have died at the hands of the christian church, by way of the inquisition.....They shall be avenged

May 7 – May 25, 1986. Anthrax tour mainland Europe promoting *Spreading the Disease*, supported by Overkill and Agent Steel.

SPREADING THE DISEASE TOUR
ANTHRAX
SUPPORTED BY
OVER KILL
ZAAL CHRISTOFFEL in MAASMECHELEN
VRIJDAG VENDREDI 23 MAI 1986 A TE 20 U H 30

May 23, 1986. Poison issue their debut album, *Look What the Cat Dragged In*, a record that would become the lightning rod for hatred of the hair metal or glam rock genre. Adding insult to injury, the album goes triple platinum, while the follow-up *Open Up and Say... Ahhh!* would do even better, hitting five times platinum.

Death Angel vocalist Mark Osegueda on the animosity thrashers had for glam:

I think a great deal of it had to be how they looked and how they dressed at the time. Thrash was so anti-image, it was just about T-shirts and tennis shoes, which… eventually the poof rockers at the time toned down their image. Thrash was going to its extreme where the glam guys were going to their extreme. The bigger the hair, the wilder the fishnets or whatever the hell, so it just looked like everything we were against.

And probably they also had all the chicks at their shows. There was definitely girls into thrash, but they were into music for the right reasons. No one was there all dolled-up, and I think that was the main thing. There was definitely a huge anti-poser thing going on here in San Francisco, but there wasn't a lot of big hair bands here. At the time there was Jetboy, who were great guys, but at the time it was still like, "The only reason I go to a Jetboy show is to check out the chicks!"

Otherwise the battle cry was, "No posers, kill posers," the Paul Baloff thing, a blatant Baloff thing. And you were just like, "Yeah! You're right!" and you'd get sucked up into the energy. Especially if you're young and influential and there's this guy on stage who's playing this amazing violent music and telling you, "No posers!" You're like, "That's right—no posers!" And Megadeth would come up; Dave Jr. all of a sudden would be up there, and he'd have a kill posers shirt and it would be like Nikki Six with a red stripe through his face… not makeup. Anti-him.

And it wasn't a San Francisco genre to us, it was an LA genre. So again it was kind of a, "Screw LA" thing at the time. Definitely if a guy came all glammed-out to a party in the East Bay, like at a house where Baloff and a bunch of guys were, a party after coming from Ruthie's Inn, if some poof rocker showed up, he would have definitely left from the vibes thrown at him, if not forcibly made to leave, holding his nose.

Death Angel guitarist Rob Cavestany on hair metal:

It's the redneck mentality that you get caught up in the hate of something, a "Those guys suck" kind of thing. Low riders suck, high riders rule! High riders suck, low riders rule! But somehow in the middle of it we ended up knowing a lot of these dudes from Jetboy, so then we ended up being friends with these guys, and it was like a pet hate after a while. At some point I can imagine not really hating the posers or really wanting to literally kill them—it just seemed fun.

But there were moments when we felt these guys are lame! They suck! But at some point we knew some of these dudes, so I just thought they were just kind of weird after a while, that it was kind of freaky. And some of these dudes, the dudes we knew who were fusing their glam with sort of punk so they had a little grit to them, I admired the grit they had underneath their thing; I just couldn't get into what they were trying to do with all the bullshit.

But it has a lot to do with your peers, because we were just at the age of being influenced by anything, so we just happened to fall in with thrasher kind of people. Other people got into the glam scene, maybe from their brother or someone they were hanging out with, so you just sort of followed stuff that was going on. Once it was, "Nuke the posers," everyone just kind of went with it.

We were younger than a lot of our peers. We were in the scene, but we were usually five years younger than everyone else we were hanging out with, so we were easily influenced by what was happening. We even went through our stages; there were points when we were wearing some freaky shit. In the very beginning when we didn't quite have our identity down, we were trying to play thrash but sometimes we were wearing some oddly bright thing or some spandex pants, and fucking with your hair a little bit in the middle, not sure how to do something rock 'n' roll with it. We were trying to figure out what seemed cool. So for a minute there, you're like any other 12-year-old kid. You don't know what you're doing; you're just following some thing that you think is cool until you hopefully discover it yourself.

Journalist and thrash expert Brandon Geist on hair metal's place in the story:

One of the important things about the first wave of thrash was if any good hero needs a villain, thrash's Lex Luthor was hair metal. Hair metal was huge at the time, and that was the LA metal scene—the hair metal Sunset Strip scene—and that's what Metallica came up around before they moved to San Francisco.

All the thrash bands, even the ones on the east coast, they were very consciously posing themselves against hair metal. The hair metal dudes were spraying their hair and putting it up, and the thrash metal dudes were wearing it down and headbanging with it. Slayer wore makeup at first, but everyone started making fun of them in the thrash scene so they took it off pretty quickly.

Thrash was trying to give their listeners the antidote to hair metal and pop rock and what was being played on MTV at the time. They were trying to play this dirty, heavy, crushing fast sound that was

almost like pure adrenaline and pure fury put to music. I think it really tapped into a lot of what was going on in the time, socially, and you can see that in the guys who are seminal metal figures.

You look at James Hetfield, growing up in the suburbs, his parents are Christian scientists, and he's got this repressed suburban life. Thrash metal was the ultimate outlet for a lot of kids who were growing up in these weird, repressed suburban lives. Listening to thrash music, making thrash metal and going to thrash shows was the best way of getting out all these feelings that you had to keep inside in your every day life.

And during the '80s you basically had the Reagan years and there were political scandals, the Iran Contra scandal, the economy was going through some rough times, and after the Nixon years there was this general disillusionment with the government and with authority in general. I think you had a similar thing going on with a lot of people around when thrash was springing up. This disillusionment with government and authority, and this return to a more DIY way of doing things. There was a lot of angst going on and pop music, hair metal, wasn't talking to a lot of kids, basically, and they needed to make their own form of music, and that was thrash.

As for the look, the ultimate thrash look is probably a denim vest over, I would say, a black leather motorcycle jacket. Probably had lots of patches or band pins over your vest. Maybe a back patch or hand-painted album cover on the back of your denim vest. And then you're wearing tight pegged-at-the-ankle black jeans. Maybe white high tops with the tongue sticking out of your jeans. Basically a thrash metal musician dressed like a thrash metal fan.

This was another thing that was huge about thrash metal, is that one of the things they were reacting against was this '70s rock star idea that a musician is over here and a fan is over here looking up at them and wishing they could be living the life of that rock star. Thrash metal was music made by fans who didn't want to differentiate themselves from the other fans. That's why thrash fans wore pins of other bands on their vests, and thrash musicians themselves were up there with pins on their vests. They wanted to communicate that "We are fans too."

And thrash musicians went out of their way to promote other bands. Metallica and their Misfits T-shirts, or Slayer with Dead Kennedys stickers on their guitars. They were very proud of their influences and they wanted to share those influences with their fans because they were all fans of music and they all wanted to be sharing their musical influences and loves.

The Headbanger founder Bob Nalbandian on thrash versus glam:

Just as I said punk and metal were total enemies in LA, thrash and glam were total enemies too. Thrash metal hated the glam scene. Metallica despised Mötley Crüe and those bands. Now you get the crossover vibe where you can be a fan of Mötley Crüe and Metallica but before that, you were one or the other. If you were a thrash band you hated glam. They were posers, they were glam fags, they were this or that. That was the attitude.

Thrash wanted to be something completely different. They didn't want to have any association with glam. Basically what glam was doing was basically what rock 'n' roll was doing for years, but even a sleazier thing. They were doing what Van Halen was doing. All their song were about sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll. Thrash said look, we don't want to be a part of that. We're going to do our own thing. In a way it was a bit more taboo, more rebellious, more controversial, something the parents would hate more, but that's what thrash was about. It wasn't about being loved or being popular. They knew. When you're a band like Slayer at that point, you're thinking to yourself there's no way we're going to be on the radio, so why even try? It didn't enter the picture. They just wanted to be the most brutal-sounding and brutal-looking band and the heaviest, fastest, loudest band around. That was their goal.

Exodus guitarist Gary Holt on a curious commonality between thrash and hair metal:

Major labels are not really what you'd call original thinkers; if a couple of thrash bands do succeed—you know Metallica, obviously, Megadeth—then they were all going to succeed. Same with grunge—they'd sign anybody in a flannel shirt that was from Seattle. I always link us and hair bands together, though, in the big downfall. I think we needed that mutual enemy of each other, and when one went, the other went right with it, you know?

So I was always secretly rooting for the return of hair metal. I always thought it would be good for us too. The kids, the unpopular kids… if all the kids in high school were into some new version of Poison or Ratt or Faster Pussycat, the unpopular kids are going to gravitate straight to bands like us again. Maybe that's why it's popular again now, I don't know. So I think we probably coat-tailed a bit on glam. Unpopular kids needs bands to like too. The rejects and delinquents, the ones that don't look good in snakeskin boots. That's why they make Doc Martins.

June 1986

June – July 1986. Slayer work with Rick Rubin on tracks for their third album, a record that will represent one of his earliest productions of a long and famed career.

Slayer drummer Dave Lombardo:
Of course *Reign in Blood* is called *the* thrash metal album of its time. I see that a lot. I go to a music store and read the Top 100 or Top 50 Metal Albums of All Time, and bam, there's Slayer. Top Albums Recorded in California—there's Slayer's *Reign in Blood*. You know, things like that. That for me is an honour, a compliment.

Slayer guitarist Kerry King on *Reign in Blood*:
Definitely a high point in thrash history. I think in most people's eyes, that's the record of records. And you know, we didn't think anything of it when we put it out. We thought, yeah, this record is cool, I'm digging it. And that's as far as we expected it to go at that point. We were just at the top of our game as far as speed goes. Probably the intense speed of *Reign in Blood* made *South of Heaven* so slow, because we just wanted to do something different.

Slayer vocalist and bassist Tom Araya:

Oh wow, that was a turning point, I think, for us. What I can tell you about *Reign in Blood*? That was a time when Rubin had approached us as far as signing us. That's when we were going through this whole thing with Brian Slagel and us. We went into the studio and we had everything rehearsed. We went into the studio and really cleaned up our sound and in roughly four weeks we had an album. It was a turning point for Slayer. Live, those make me play fast (laughs). They make me play fast and I get a little short-winded every now and then.

On *Reign in Blood*, we went in and recorded the songs and we were finishing up doing the mixes and final takes, and I looked up and they had the totals, the list of songs, and it had 28 minutes. And I'm like, "Is that the right time? Is that the total time for all the songs?" And Andy Wallace looks up and, "No, no, there must be a problem. That's not right. That can't be the total time. Let me check." You know what I mean? And then he's like, "No, that's the total time."

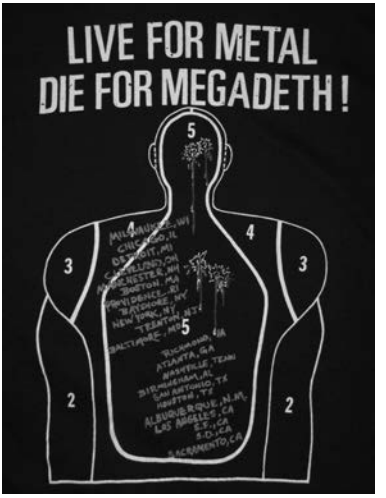
So we were kind of shocked. We looked at Rubin and we told Rubin, "Well, ten songs constitutes an album, right?" "Yup." "We've got ten songs on this record, right?" And he goes, "Yup." "Is there problem?" "Nope" (laughs). So that was it, end of discussion. And I'm like, cool. And then you know, every album after that, we don't

really pay attention to the time. We just sort of write songs and put them on an album. If we like them, they go on, if we don't like them, they don't go on tape.

June 15 – 17, 1986. Death Angel record their debut album, *The Ultra-Violence*, in just three days, with producer Davy Vain, working at Banquet Studios in Santa Rosa, California.

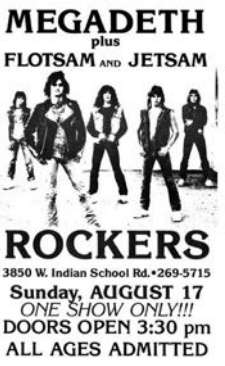
June 19, 1986. Flotsam and Jetsam issue their well-regarded technical thrash debut, *Doomsday for the Deceiver*. It is produced by Metal Blade Records team Brian Slagel and Bill Metoyer. Bassist on the album is Jason Newsted, soon to depart for Metallica.

Eric AK on *Doomsday for the Deceiver* receiving a 6K review in Kerrang!:
That was fun; that was a lot of fun. When I first saw that, I was like, "That's it, I've made it, I'm going to be. Mr. Big Shot." That 6K carried us through a lot of stuff too. It got us on the big Megadeth tour, it got us all kinds of stuff, it got us a really good manager who ended up losing his mind. That was a huge point for us.



Flotsam and Jetsam guitarist Ed Carlson:

Jason basically wrote *Doomsday*, all the lyrics and a lot of the music. He's a writer. He does that stuff all the time. Just because he joined Metallica doesn't mean he quit writing. If anything, he's doing it more, but they still didn't use one idea of his on the last record. I know the ideas J's probably brought to the drawing board for them and they were probably scared of them.



When Newsted left Flotsam and joined Metallica, Peter, their manager, said, "I don't ever want to hear this Flotsam and Jetsam thing. I don't want you asking favours for them, this and that." He kind of laid this big, ol' arm of law on Jason. This was immediately after he joined the band. Probably the same day. It just never worked out from the time he started with them until now. It was always like we were taboo for some reason. We would be a great band to open for Metallica. It'd be perfect.

Mid-1986. Celtic Frost issue the three-track *Tragic Serenades* EP.

Mid-1986. Germany's Iron Angel issue their second and last album, *Winds of War*.

July 1986

July 1986. Fourth chair leg in thrash's Teutonic Big Four, Tankard, issue their debut, *Zombie Attack*, on Noise Records. The band record the album the previous month, working with Harris Johns and Musiclab Studio in Berlin, Germany.

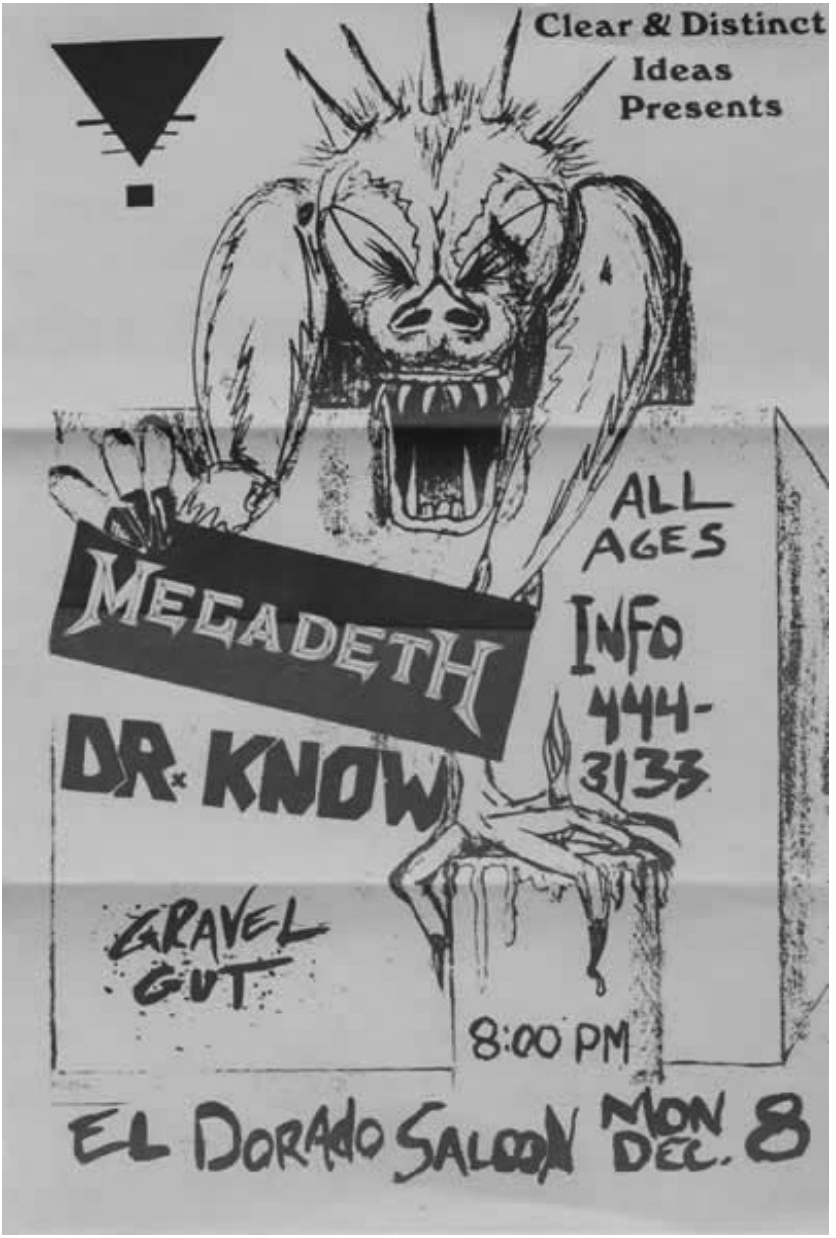
July 1986. Raven issue the five-track *Mad* EP.

Raven vocalist and bassist John Gallagher:

We were going to open for Twisted Sister. We did *The Pack Is Back*, and partly it wasn't supported by the record company, partly we didn't get the reaction we wanted. We had wonderful plans for a video, but they wouldn't cough up the money for it. We had built this wonderful boat and they wouldn't give us any wind to sail it. And we heard there was going to be this big tour with Twisted Sister, and we said, well, let's bang out an EP and get on the road. So we did that

Raven *Mad* EP, to say, "We still kick ass, honest to God" etc. etc. And literally three days before the tour started, it was canceled. They had that album, *Come Out and Play* and it died a death and it was just horrendous. So we ended up just going out and doing our own tour.

July 1986. Santa Monica, California crossover act Cryptic Slaughter issue their debut album, *Convicted*, on Metal Blade imprint Death Records, also home to D.R.I., Corrosion of Conformity, Dr. Know and The Mentors.



July 1986. Piledriver issue their second and last album, *Stay Ugly*. Both albums become cloaked in a mess of shady business dealings, with estimates of worldwide sales of various editions cresting at 500,000 copies.

Piledriver vocalist Gord Kirchin on *Stay Ugly*:

Instead of Les Howe, it was now the guys from Virgin Steele writing, David Defies and Eddie Pursino. Les had a falling out with the record weasel due to not getting paid, and left Piledriver behind in a huff. I didn't even know. I found out on my way to the studio that it wasn't Les, but the Virgin Steele guys. *Stay Ugly* was doing okay, but sold about a quarter of what *Metal Inquisition* did. And it was attracting a different crowd because it was a thrashier record. We were getting more of the Anthrax and Metallica types. And I loved that. As much as I loved *Metal Inquisition*, I really dug the harder, faster, raw increase in intensity Dave and Eddie brought to the project.

Manager/label owner Zoran Busic had an iron fist over the "band." I naively felt since he was the record guy, he must know best. I learned a lot about the dark side of the biz through all the mistakes he made. He grossly mismanaged and misdirected us, and did everything wrong. With even the slightest bit of support we could have been massive. But, no, in his view it was better to rip us off and line his pockets and push this mystery band bullshit so as not to have to spend money on it. Just take, take, take. I have yet to speak to any band member from any band he had dealings with who would say he didn't burn them. Not a single one.

This whole episode left me very bitter. I haven't received a royalty statement since 1986, because he says we didn't sell anything. Even the ones I got before that were cooked book bullshit showing all losses and no royalties. Yet he's re-releasing *Metal Inquisition* and *Stay Ugly* on CD again! I put it to the king of record weasels, Mr. Busic, that we must've sold a lot of fucking albums to warrant it, and he just wants to continue cashing in on our good work without recompense to us, forever. Everywhere we went back then, people knew us and said we sold a lot of records. In later years I was to learn it was like 500,000 records worldwide.

I had the loftiest of goals of turning that recording project into a living, breathing and stage-blazing band to satisfy our admittedly large and growing fanbase. But with all the record weasel's refusal to do anything with Piledriver but to reap the money our talents generated, we were doomed from the get-go to die on the vine. And seeing how my ideas, skills, and boundless creativity were summarily rejected, and for all intents and purposes forever would be, I was getting fed up with this weasel. I was young and somewhat blind. I was just a hard rockin' Ottawa boy who had hopes and dreams that were quickly burnt and scorched by a selfish weasel behind a desk.

Besides being metal's Chuck Berry for my uncompensated contributions to metal, the only part that I'm truly embarrassed about is how I didn't properly take care of my legal matters, that I blindly signed the contracts without legal counsel, swooning to the record weasel's silver tongued platitudes that all was cool, all was rockin', I was going to be a star.

I'm really quite proud of what I did because I don't consider myself a singer in the traditional sense. I'm a vocalist, I can vocalize, I bark at best (laughs). I've long been a multi-instrumentalist and I was just so glad to be accepted as a front man/vocalist, and that brings me pride—and how far it reached. I'm very proud of how far it did go. From a basement studio in Ottawa and a garage studio on Long Island, to worldwide acceptance and fans. Pretty magical in hindsight.

It's just too bad that mis-manager completely fucked it up. Because we could've been Metallica if he would have allowed the live side of it to flourish. If that short-sighted pinhead would've been smart and put some pennies into it and, you know, maybe underwrite a small tour to get the ball rolling, it would've just ballooned; we would've taken over the planet. That *any* people to this day claim that *Metal Inquisition* or *Stay Ugly* is their favourite metal album, or that it was one of the best metal albums of its time, that blows my fucking mind, and is deeply appreciated, because that's the only payment I have or will ever receive for my work on them.

July 2, 1986. Proving their mettle as an album band and not a single band, Metallica launches no singles from *Master of Puppets*, other than a French "Master of Puppets"/"Welcome Home (Sanitarium)" on this date in France.

BUFFALO... GET READY FOR THE HEAVIEST NIGHT OF YOUR LIFE!!
WED. AUGUST 6TH
METALLICA
THE BEST, FASTEST & HEAVIEST OF ALL U.S. METAL BANDS.
—JOHN STREDNANSKY, D.J. KSPB, MONTEREY
POTENTIAL TO BECOME U.S. HEAVY METAL GODS.
—METAL MANIA, SAN FRANCISCO
and SPECIAL GUESTS:
KEEL
LIVE! ON STAGE at
8 P.M.
SEPTEMBER'S CAFE
207 Youngs Rd RIGHT BEHIND THE AIRPORT
ALL AGES ADMITTED
SPECIAL DRINKING AREA FOR OVER 21's
TICKETS ONLY $7.00 IN ADVANCE ON SALE NOW AT ALL TICKET RACK OUTLETS AND AT SEPTEMBERS CAFE
AFTER THE METALLICA & KEEL CONCERT EZEKIAL TAKES THE STAGE FOR 2 HARD-ROCKIN' SETS!!!
PRESENTED BY WBYR 107.7, SEPTEMBERS & HARVEY & CORKY Prod.

July 12, 1986. Destruction issue their second full-length, *Eternal Devastation*.

Schmier on how the Destruction albums sold in the marketplace:
That's a good question. If I knew that I would be pretty rich. But I think the best selling one was *Eternal Devastation*. On that one we were trying to get even more original. People always told us we sounded too much like Slayer, so we were trying to get away from that. So we tried to create more original guitars and more of an original Destruction style. And it has my favourite songs, like "Eternal Ban," "Curse the Gods" and one of my top favourites, "Live Without Sense," which is of the first groove songs we wrote.

July 17 – August 13, 1986. Megadeth supports King Diamond across America.

August 1986

August 1986. Nuclear Assault issue their debut EP, a three-tracker called *Brain Dead*.

Nuclear Assault bassist Dan Lilker:
I never really thought about how my time with Anthrax affected Nuke, but I suppose that it drove me to want to keep up the intense side of things musically. When they got Joey, they kinda went more melodic. In general, my time in Anthrax was a great learning experience, being the first professional band I ever played in.

August 1986. Hirax issue their second album, *Hate, Fear and Power*.

August 1986. Kreator issue their three-track *Flag of Hate* EP.

August 12, 1986. LA's Abattoir issue their second and last album, *The Only Safe Place*, on Combat. The album is recorded at Westlake, with producer Chuck Rosa.

September 1986

September 1986. New York hardcore act Cro-Mags issue their seminal crossover debut, *The Age of Quarrel*, on Profile Records.

September – December 1986. Overkill work on tracks for their second album at Pyramid Studios in Ithaca, NY, Alex Perialas producing. It will be the last Overkill album for drummer Rat Skates, and the first for the band's new deal with Atlantic, who will work with the band through 1994's *W.F.O.*.

> Overkill vocalist Bobby "Blitz" Ellsworth on their legacy of self-producing their albums:
>
> Well, we tracked production credits from very early on. We wanted to be involved in the production because we had an idea of how we sounded and what we wanted to sound like. So I think only *Feel the Fire* is not co-produced by us. That was produced by Carl Canedy from The Rods.
>
> Then we moved over to Taking Over with Alex Perialas; we wanted co-production credits. We were always the guys that wanted to learn about twisting the knobs, moving faders, understanding EQs,

understanding the gear, to be having an active role in what the final product was. So it was an early on interest. Not that we were good at doing it, and we may have taken production credits with Alex. Alex really produced the record, you know, but we became more and more into it.

I think that when the '90s came around, and especially the later '90s, it was a very lean time for this music. Many guys went home and lived in their old teenager rooms in their parents' house. But what we decided was, "Hey, you know, fuck it, let's just keep doing it. If we have the opportunity, let's seek the opportunity out."

So, it became more of the thinking that, how can we minimize our expense and maximize our output? Well, we've been training to do production right from the beginning. So, I think that that's where it actually stepped over the line, when we were really twisting knobs. And D.D. went to the limit of, you know, starting a studio, and by 2000s we were in his studio doing records. We were twisting the knobs, doing all the recording and all the productions.

September 7, 1986. The first Dynamo festival featured Joshua, Avalon and NWOBHM carryovers Angel Witch, Chariot, Satan and Battlezone, along with thrashers Onslaught.

Onslaught vocalist Sy Keeler:
That was pretty amazing. We came on stage and the place erupted. It was in the old car park in front of the old Dynamo festival club. I remember distinctly that I had to walk uphill, walking up to the stage and it was a huge stage. That was our first, and until this year, our only festival. We opened with "Let There Be Death" and the place just erupted. The security barriers in front of the stage were just dismantled; they were up in the air and passed back so the crowd could get to the front of the stage. The security guards were beating kids up and we stopped halfway through "Metal Forces," which I think was the second or third song, because it had gone too far. There was blood being spilled so we stopped to calm everybody down. The security guards were terrible; they just couldn't handle it at all. It was crazy and it was amazing!

September 10 – 26, 1986. Metallica take their Damage Inc. tour to Europe, with Anthrax as support. The last two-thirds of the campaign is cancelled when Cliff Burton is killed in a tour bus accident.

September 19, 1986. Megadeth issue their seminal *Peace Sells… But Who's Buying?* album, which would be the last for original guitarist Chris Poland.

Megadeth vocalist and guitarist Dave Mustaine on the iconic *Peace Sells* cover art:

David Ellefson and myself, and our agent at the time, a guy named Andy Summers, had got together in New York. We were in Manhattan, and actually across the street from the UN building. I don't know why we were there, but we were there. And we were talking about the album cover, and the fact that the first record was ruined by Combat, and how they ruined the artwork on that, didn't even do it, and just how important it was for me to get the artwork right this time.

And we talked to this guy, this artist, Ed Repka. And Andy and David and I went out to go get ribs at a place called Wylie's, this rib joint—they had some franchises around Manhattan. So we went in there, and we just started talking. And over the course of the period of talking I said that I would like it to be the UN all bombed-out. And then somebody said this and somebody said that, and then we would have airplanes coming in, and a For Sale sign, and all these things, and it germinated from that meal with Andy Summers.

We saw it done and it was pretty straight from the get-go. I wasn't really a big artist at the time, and you've got to remember, Martin, this was almost 25 years ago. And so I've learned a lot since then about artwork and T-shirts and album covers and stuff like that. But at the time, it was my first real proud moment. Because we had a lot of T-shirt artwork he had done. We basically got ideas from comic books and stuff like that, but as soon as that thing came out, it could become real. And that was the beginning. You know, we've had a lot of great success with it. We've had managers who've said they don't want Vic, he's been taken off of album covers, we've had the logo changed..."

As for the songs, "Peace Sells" was my first real educated song about where I was. Because by that point I had matured. Even though I was in my 20s already, I still was very much living a very self-centered and selfish life at the time because I was Dave Mustaine. If you didn't like me, that was okay, and if I didn't like you, that was not okay. And I had a lot of cleaning up to do, put it this way, once I got to grown-up land.

And then you start to see people and you've got this weird feeling like you've just clogged their toilet and, "Oh, I know that I did something to you… ooh, hey, can I talk to you?" Case in point, Brad Gillis. I just met Brad over the Seymour Duncan thing at NAMM, and I had to go apologize to him because I'd been saying that I didn't think he did a good job when he went out and played with Ozzy after Randy died. And he didn't even know about it and I was like (drops his jaw).

If I didn't say anything, he wouldn't have known about it still. But at least I'm clean inside and I know I got right with that, and the dude's a great guitar player. I didn't say he couldn't play, I said he's more than capable of playing that stuff. And that's what kind of got me in trouble, because I said how I felt. You didn't have to ask me what I was thinking, because if you were in arm's distance, I told you.

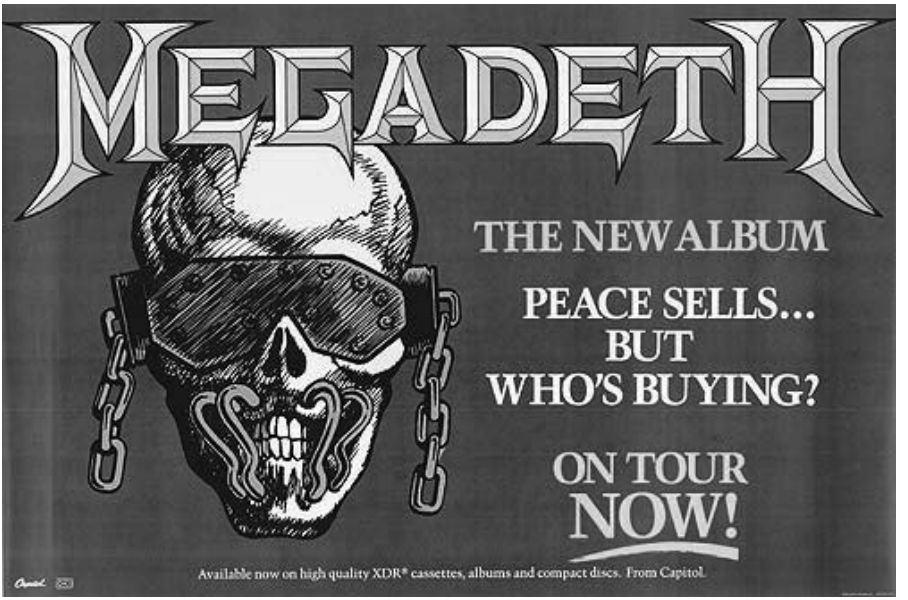
But politically, I don't really think the political state of the United States has influenced me so much, so much as I know what our inalienable God-given rights are in the constitution as an American citizen and I know what is happening. Even right now in the administration that's in office right now, I know what's wrong. I don't know how to fix it because the way I believe in politics, I don't think anybody would do it. I think the politicians should work for free.

I think if they're public servants then they should serve. I think the teachers and the cops should be paid more. Then you won't have corrupt cops and you'll have teachers that actually teach your kids. We have some of the dumbest kids in the world in our country. If you look at the scale in schools, we're not at the top any more, we're not even close. We used to be. People have always said I'm a political writer, and I'm not a political writer. I just write.

"Wake Up Dead" was written about me cheating on a girl I was living with because I needed a place to stay and I needed someone to feed me. But the girl I really loved was the one I was cheating on, and thank God David Ellefson had a van. I would sneak downstairs into the parking lot of the apartment and I'd have sex with this girl and then I'd take those miniature bottles of vodka and splash that on my face and say I'd been out drinking with the boys and I'd come home. I mean, that's alcohol abuse right there. So I'd come up, and most of the time I would just flop in bed, but every once awhile I would have to do an encore performance and it was a little bit harder, if you know what I mean.

Megadeth bassist Dave Ellefson on obtaining a major label deal for *Peace Sells*:

The same pattern that we saw with our indie deals repeated itself, once Metallica signed with Elektra. And in fact Michael Alago, who signed Metallica, was courting us at one point, to get signed to Elektra, and it's interesting because, I think we were a little, maybe, kind of questioning that, because it's like, you know, does this put us second fiddle to Metallica? What does this do? And it's interesting, because you question, where is their priority really going to be? Obviously Metallica is the big priority at Elektra.



But I think what it did was it certainly started to stir the waters for us, and then Tim Karr, who signed us to Capitol Records, we did a show, I think it was in January of '86, and it was right before we got... forgive me on the time on this, but I think we'd just recorded the *Peace Sells* record or we were about to go record.

And we played a show at Irving Plaza, and our agent, Andy Summers, who was like a cool indie agent, did a lot of punk rock stuff—Murphy's Law, I think, Bad Religion; I think he was even Green Day's agent at some point—so he really got the indie alternative types of music, and I think he saw our band as one of those kind of alternative bands. We weren't mainstream metal. The thrash thing was so out there, very alternative to what was happening in the mainstream, certainly MTV. And so he brought Tim Karr down to Irving Plaza to see the band and he loved it, and, "Yeah man, I'm in."

So he came in and started bidding against Elektra. So yeah, our bidding war was basically Capitol against Elektra. And I think there

might have been some interest from Atlantic Records, maybe even from MCA. I'm not exactly sure, but it seems like when one person jumps into the water, everyone follows.

That's the thing that happened with all of these bands. We were all signed to these independent labels, and that's where the independent label guys are smart. Because they get in, they get a piece of you, and that's the idea. And so that's where they get their big reward, of course, is being sort of the broker who discovered the nugget of gold, that he gets a piece of the gold forever (laughs). And I don't know what everybody's deals are, but that was where to some degree, the indie guys, to be honest with you, Jonny Z, Brian Slagel, they certainly understood metal, as fans, and I'm not sure some of these other labels understood it as anything other than a business deal, and that can suck.

And so it's interesting, as I see it from the outside looking in, I don't know any of the details of the deals, but both Anthrax and Slayer started on these indies, and then Slayer went with Def Jam, Anthrax, eventually with Island, but ours was definitely a straight vertical move right up to Capitol, straight off of an indie straight into a major label. And I'm not sure if some of these others were kind of imprints, because Island, even at that time was... of course U2 was huge, but they didn't have a huge roster. They had very few bands that were really huge, and they didn't have a large roster of a lot of artists, as far as I can remember.

But the album itself, let's put it this way, we went on tour and played the songs from *Peace Sells* before we recorded them, so we had a good idea which ones were going to work, so that was to our advantage to put the songs that are on the record, on this record. Then we got picked up by Capitol Records, and that became our first major label release. We had toured like three or four times before we'd recorded *Peace Sells* so we knew when we went in the studio what worked and what didn't, what people liked and what they weren't liking.

So we had such a great pre-production of doing it live for three tours that it just came natural. And as far as those records go, man, they just stand the test of time, and every time I listen to them, I go, man, this is amazing stuff. And at the time you don't realize it. You're just playing and having fun and you don't realize that ten years from

that day or even 20 years from that day, this stuff is still going to stand the test of time. I'm very proud of that stuff.

Megadeth guitarist Chris Poland on his Megadeth days:

You know what? It was a lot of fun though; don't let anybody fool ya. I mean we had our moments where we were like, "Oh my God, am I gonna die right now?" But, the bottom line is, think about it, we were all in our mid-20s actually, when this all took off, and it's kind of like Dave Ellefson said, when we were on the road we were fine because we had some place to live. We were like, "Hey man, we've got blankets and pillows and running water, hey." So there was always that aspect of it. But then we would go on the road for two months straight, six shows a week, playing that set. It was pretty brutal.

Peace Sells is the Led Zeppelin *II* of the whole Megadeth thing. I always felt that that was there best record, for me anyway. That was the one where they came into being. I'm talking about the speed metal genre. I'm not saying that it's... that album, Led Zeppelin *II* is like the Bible. I'm just saying, in that catalog for me, I always see that that record will always sell. Just like Led Zeppelin *II* will always sell. That's the way that I look at it.

But if you want to talk about it musically, even today it stands up on its own two feet. You put it in right now against anything else and it's a great record. It was pretty painful because we worked long, long hours. Sometimes we worked like 16 hours straight a day and we would go to sleep, wake up and be in the studio within ten minutes and we'd start all over again.

We didn't have a big budget so it was like every minute counted. It was at the Music Grinder, which doesn't exist anymore. I remember when everybody came in they were like... Scott Menzies came in, he was our tour manager for almost every tour that I was on with Megadeth. And he's like, "Oh my God," at just how amazing it sounded and how it got to tape. And that was a lot to do with Randy Burns, was how to capture all that sound and make it make sense.

One of my favorite tracks is "The Conjuring;" I really like the ending part of it. Of course, "Peace Sells" was a great tune. "Peace

Sells" was like really long, when we were working on it. It was actually Gar's suggestion to shorten it. We did and look what happened. Actually "I Ain't Superstitious," that was Jay Jones; he was basically our kind of manager at the time and it was his idea to do "Boots" on the first record. So he said why don't you do this song on the second record. I was like all over it, 'cause I was coming from a Jeff Beck place anyway. So that song I like a lot. That seemed to be accepted by radio, which was strange because it was just such a jam. But it was always played on the radio in LA. I used to hear it all the time in LA.

The guitar sounds and the production are so prominent for the whole record that when that song comes up and all the same tones are there, and Dave's delivery of the song, you know vocally, it totally becomes part of Megadeth, which is why you want to do a cover. You don't want to do a cover and have it sound just like the person that made you want to do the cover, that influenced you. At least I don't think you do.

"Good Mourning/Black Friday"… I was just talking to somebody about that the other day. Megadeth was so progressive. That was one of the reasons I was drawn to the band when Gar said, "Hey, we need a second guitar for this; you gotta check this stuff out." When I listened to it I was like, wow. You would hear these bands, man, and it would be like, I don't think I can stand there and bang out four chords and not look bored. Me and Gar were totally into fusion, that kind of rock-fusion stuff, the first Stanley Clarke record, Jeff Beck's instrumental stuff; that's where me and Gar were coming from. When we heard the Megadeth ideas we were like, "Oh yeah, I can do this."

All it was was Gar and myself would listen to the tune and then just play it the way we would play it. Especially Gar; Gar's playing is what gave it that kind of... not swing, I'm not saying that Gar had swing. But you know, the thing about that record is—and I think it's with any record—when you're so close to a record and you make that record from beginning to end, and you tour playing those songs before you make the record and then after you make the record, you kind of lose sight about where that music sits in a historical value, than if you weren't that close to it.

So at the time I was like, "Yeah, whatever," because it can't affect you anymore. You're so used to it that... at the time what I should

have done was looked into people's faces in front of me when we were playing the stuff. And that should have told me more about where I was at in that band. For me it was getting kind of like samey. I'm not saying that I didn't enjoy the energy, and I did see the energy that they had and I played off that energy. But as far as musically it wasn't until maybe five years after I got sober that one day I threw that record on and went, "Oh my God, that's what was going on." Honestly, because you get so close to something that the point isn't driven home until after you leave it alone for a long time.

September 20, 1986. Metallica play the Birmingham Odeon. The date is significant because this is the first time Diamond Head's Brian Tatler, having put Lars up at his parents' house for weeks back in 1981, meets the rest of the band. Tatler is called up on stage to play "Am I Evil?" with the band.

PHIL McINTYRE & OUTLAW By Arrangement With FAIR WARNING
PRESENT
METALLICA
Special Guests
ANTHRAX
BIRMINGHAM ODEON
SAT 20 SEPTEMBER 7.30
Tickets: £4.50
Available From: B/O Tel 021 - 643 - 6101
HAMMERSMITH ODEON
SUN 21 SEPTEMBER 7.30
Tickets: £5.50 & £4.50
Available From: B/O Tel 01 - 748 - 4081
Keith Prowse (credit cards: Tel: 01 - 741 8989)
Stargreen, Premier, Albermarle, L.T.B.

MCP by arrangement with Fair Warning, Presents
METALLICA
Plus Special Guests
THE MASTER OF PUPPETS TOUR
CARDIFF ST. DAVIDS HALL
WEDNESDAY 10th SEPTEMBER 7.30 p.m.
Tickets: £4.50
Available from B/O Tel: 0222 371236
BRADFORD ST. GEORGES HALL
THURSDAY 11th SEPTEMBER 7.30 p.m.
Tickets: £4.50, £4.00
Available from B/O Tel: 0274 752000
EDINBURGH PLAYHOUSE THEATRE
FRIDAY 12th SEPTEMBER 7.30 p.m.
Tickets: £4.50, £4.00
Available from B/O Tel: 031-557 2590

September 26, 1986. Cliff Burton's last show with Metallica before his death. The concert takes place at Solnahallen in the Swedish capital of Stockholm. Support on the night is Anthrax.

September 27, 1986. Metallica's Cliff Burton is killed in a tour bus accident, in Sweden, at 6:15 AM. The bus had hit an icy patch. Cliff was ejected out of a window and the bus landed on top of him.

Testament vocalist Chuck Billy:

I did my audition—I think it might have been the only audition—and I got the gig, and started from that point in the band. They kind of had the record deal already but I kind of walked in and Jonny Zazula wanted to know, "Let me hear the demo with the new singer." So I did a demo, sent it out to him. He dug it, flew out to hear a live audition, and so we were all fired up.

The morning of the audition, it was about noon, him and his wife come and they look terrible. They'd been up all night, and we're like, "What's going on?" They were just in bad shape. They're like,

"We've been up all night. Cliff Burton died last night." That was the night of the accident.

So the next morning, that's when our audition was. So we were all bummed-out. It was the weirdest audition because here Cliff had passed away and we're auditioning to get a record contract and it was such a solemn audition. Everybody was just quiet, played the songs, and we're all done, and they're like, "Okay, we got a deal." And it was kind of like that morning, surreal, no excitement, everybody was sad, they went back to the hotel and dealt with their business with Cliff, and that was that.

Thrash photographer Bill Hale:
When Cliff died, everything changed. For me, it was kind of weird. I started shooting LA bands, which was kind of hollow. And unfortunately, what happens is, when bands get successful everybody else jumps on the bandwagon. And people really rag on the LA hair bands, but it also happened in San Francisco, with all the thrash bands. You had Blind Illusion, all these other bands just trying to do the same thing, and it just wasn't happening for me.

September 29, 1986. Kirk, James and Lars return to the US, after the death of Cliff Burton.

October 1986

October 1986. Infernal Majesty issue their debut demo, a self-titled, consisting of four tracks, "Overlord," "Night of the Living Dead," "Skeletons in the Closet" and "S.O.S." The band optimistically print up 2000 copies.

October 1986. Belgian thrashers Warhead issue their second album, *The Day After*, on Mausoleum Records.

October 6, 1986. Metal Church issue their classic Mark Dodson-produced second album, *The Dark*. Tour dates with Metallica ensue, as well as shows with Anthrax and King Diamond. The album is dedicated to Cliff Burton, who was killed in a tour bus accident nine days earlier. The album reached #92 on the Billboard charts and stayed charted for 23 weeks.

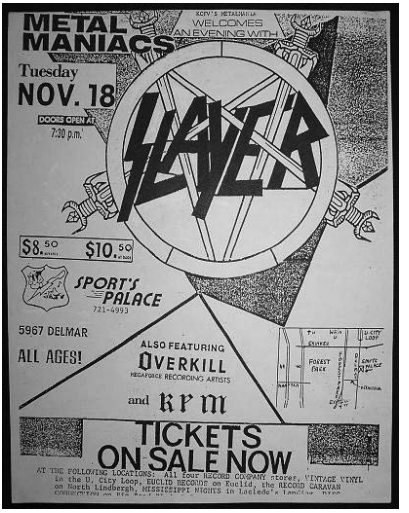
October 7, 1986. Anthrax issue "Madhouse" as a single. The song's memorable video has them playing in an insane asylum.

Anthrax guitarist Dan Spitz:
We did that in a closed and condemned insane asylum, I think in New Jersey somewhere; we were all still based somewhere in New York,

all spread out. We had a lot of our friends and part of our crew that was coming on tour with us at that time and we were travelling in just a regular van at that time. We just shot this hilarious video. And I remember, this was before moshing was known as the word moshing. It was from the punk era of slamdancing. So I remember them going, "Why don't you get on Billy Milano's shoulders and we'll have everybody just dance around you during your solo?" And we did that. It was a "What do you wanna do?" kinda video; you know, just shoot it. And it came out really cool. We dressed up all our friends in blood and all that kind of stuff. But yeah, that song was a good breakthrough.

October 7, 1986. Nuclear Assault, featuring ex-Anthrax bassist Danny Lilker, issue their debut LP, *Game Over*, on Combat Records.

October 7, 1986. Slayer's seminal *Reign in Blood* is released. It, and *Master of Puppets*, are the two main albums cited as the greatest thrash albums of all time. People talk about *Rust in Peace* and *Bonded by Blood* (and really no particular Anthrax album), but not with the same unanimity as they do *Master* and *Reign*. *Reign in Blood* is the first of a long-standing association with soon to be production legend Rick Rubin.



Slayer drummer Dave Lombardo on why *Reign in Blood* is considered a classic:

Maybe because of the length—28 minutes—and what it contains. It sounds like it would be longer but it's actually a very short record. The songs are very short, straight to the point. I think it marked an era, a time. We got picked up by Rick Rubin, which says a lot. It's just a cool record. There's just something about it. I don't want to make any comparisons, but that record has magic like AC/DC's *Highway to Hell*. That album, there's something about it that it has some kind of life to it, a chemistry, and *Reign in Blood* has the same thing.

We were finding our sound. I think finding our sound was key to that record. That set the standard at that time, because we were experimenting. Because on, say, *Hell Awaits*, there was a lot of reverb and we were trying to find ourselves at the time. The reverb was influenced by Venom and how their music was being recorded. But I think Rick Rubin really defined *Reign in Blood*, him and Andy Wallace.

And Rick influenced me, especially, with the drums. I don't know if he influenced the guitar players that much. Maybe for that record he did, but the later ones he didn't. But he influenced me a lot with being there and telling me to try a drum roll before the chorus. Whenever he would hear something, "Do that again, I really like that, that sounds great. That gives it a really good groove to the song." He'd just pick up on things I would perform and just elaborate on that. So he would take bits and pieces and tell me to elaborate, and I would come up with more, "Okay, that's the right direction. Now try something like that, but this way."

So he basically taught me how to fine tune what rhythms and beats to put in between the song, and where to roll. Which before *Reign in Blood*, and a little bit during *Reign in Blood*, but before, I would be very sporadic. I would do a drum roll where maybe it shouldn't have been. He influenced me a lot and taught me a lot, even on the later records.

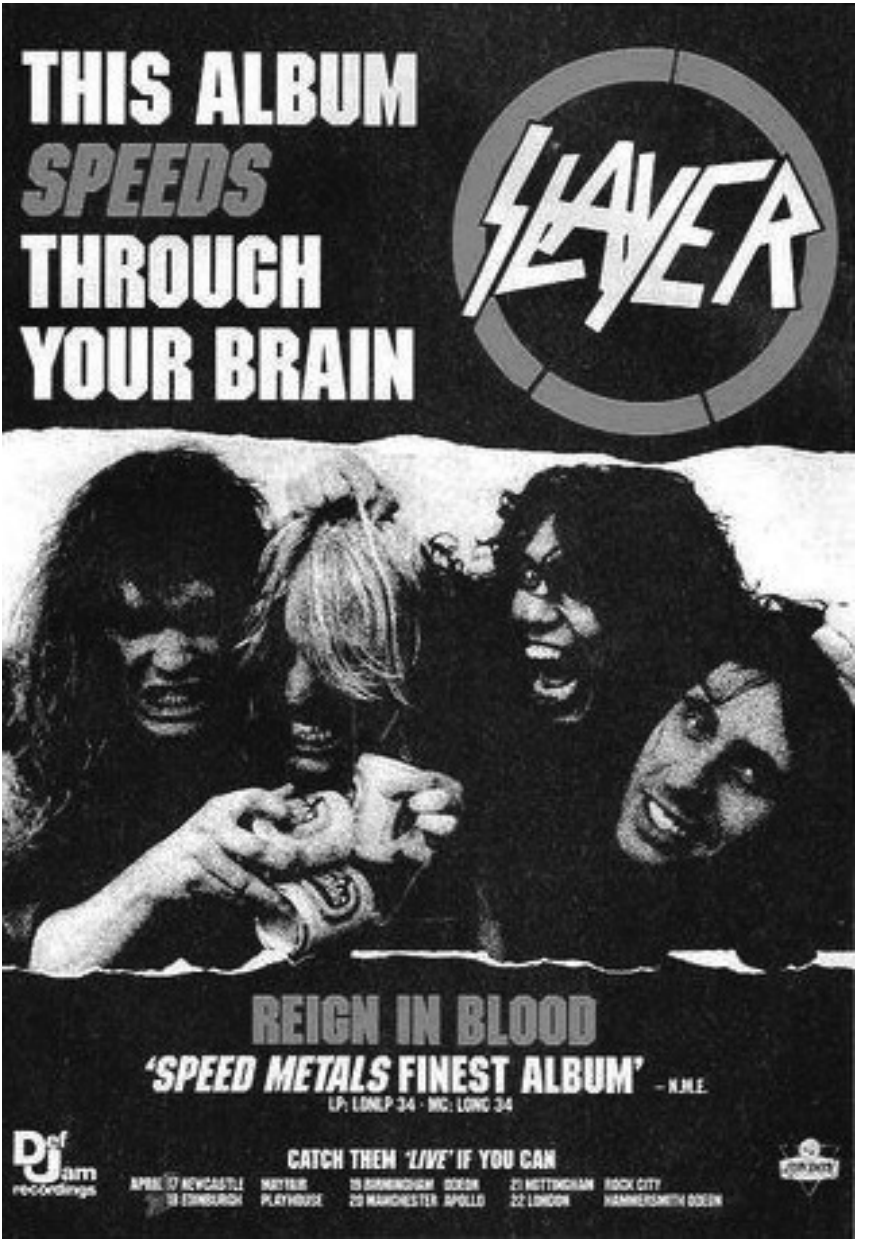
He liked the band, of course, but deep inside, the rhythm and drums is what he liked. He liked the solid backbeat, the backbone. He was into rap, so that's just solid, and a rock drummer needs to be solid, and for a thrash metal drummer to play that solid at that speed, that's where he appreciated the band. He saw something in maybe the consistency of the drumming. Like any band, every drummer has to be solid and producers like a solid drummer because then you avoid all the editing and problems when you have an inexperienced or lacking drummer.

As for signing with him, when we stepped up to Def Jam, we got a tour bus. We were traveling around in a van and getting into a tour bus was luxury. The hotels were much nicer. We weren't staying at hotels that would rent hourly. These were nice places—that helped. The record company's support was twice as good.

The direction of our sound was all done in the studio and we went with what Rubin and Andy Wallace did. We weren't going to argue with those veterans at the time. They were young but they were still veterans. So developing the sound and the future of the band or where we wanted to go, if I remember correctly, they did come up to us and discuss the future and what they wanted to do. But if it didn't sit well with the guys in the band, all of us, we wouldn't do it. I think a lot of the stuff this band has done has been done with our permission, where we acknowledge this has been done and we're doing this, instead of a record company or a manager dictating what this band should do.

But we really proved ourselves live. You have to show the people that buy your records that you can perform this music. That's number one and that's something Slayer has always had from the beginning.

We recorded *Reign in Blood* without computers, and today everything is done on computers. Everything is fixed. Nothing on that record, very minor editing, everything is performance, everything is beginning to end.



Maybe we cut one big section and cut it with another one, and you do that by splicing tape, but for the most part that whole record was done without any editing. I think touring is important

because you have to promote the record and the people want to see that performance you put on record—and if you can't do it, you're out of luck.

The fans are smart. They can tell what's real and what isn't, and that's why a lot of pop musicians, they don't really tour. Or there's one hit and that's it. I've heard of rap artists who can't finish tours because their voice goes out. How can your voice go out? Unless you're not a real singer and everything is fixed in the studio. Sing a little part, take a break, oh my voice is out, sing the next part and the record is recorded that way. So when it comes time to perform live, they can't cut it. You do 30 days and they can't even make it.

Slayer vocalist and bassist Tom Araya on *Reign in Blood*:

We did it within three years, because in 1983 we came out with *Show No Mercy* and in those three years we evolved to *Reign In Blood*. From there, everything revolved around that, with speed and heaviness. And I remember when I looked up and realized it was only 28 minutes and said, "Is that all the songs?," Rubin looked up and said, "Yup, that's all the songs." We were recording the songs and never once did we even think to look at the times structured to those songs. Because they were complete songs. You don't give a thought about how long the song is.

The only one we thought was short was "Necrophobic." That's the only one we knew, because it's obvious that it's a short song. The other ones, we were singing them and playing them, "Argh, this is great." Then we talked to Rubin, and he said, "Well, you've given me ten songs. It didn't state the length." He wasn't freakin' out. It was his label. Rubin is the boss. "You've given me ten songs; nothing stipulates time." He was happy. He wasn't really concerned at all.

They put the full album on both sides of a cassette tape! If anything, that would be the one record that could've gone platinum because it was sold twice every time you bought a cassette. I thought it was probably the only record we hit platinum with and we won't get credited for it—it's an hour album, but it's only considered one album.

But that that record is probably the one that a lot of people try to compare everything to, you know what I mean? And in all honesty, a lot of that has to do with a lot of magazines coming out recently, you know, with "The must owns." They put together your album collection. They tell you, to be a savvy person into music, these are the records you must have in your collection.

And *Reign in Blood* is always included in there, as a metal album. You know, "This would be a record to add to your collection." And I think that might have had a lot to do with it. Journalists, magazines...

and I'm talking about magazines that have nothing to do with music, GQ-type magazines. They're either a kid or an adult male type magazine, where they say, "Hey, you want the ultimate collection?! This is the ultimate collection!" And they always include *Reign in Blood* in there.

But it's not only *Reign in Blood*; sometimes they'll include *Seasons* or *South*, which is great. But I think it's like anything else. Kids get into these death metal bands, and then a friend of theirs will go, "Do you want to hear the band that started it all?" (laughs). Or, "Do you want to hear something really heavy?!" And these new metal bands that are out these days; kids are getting into it, and they're in the Top 40 or on MTV, and there's always a friend or two that is out they're going, "You wanna something really heavy?!" Like that *Twilight Zone* episode. "Do you want to see something really scary?" It's basically word-of-mouth. "If you think that's heavy, hear this."

Metal Blade Records founder Brian Slagel on Slayer growing up and moving out:

As the '80s progressed and the scene started to get bigger and bigger, all of a sudden the major labels became, "Hey, what's going on here? There's people selling lots of records. We should be involved in this." So slowly but surely from about '86, '87, we lost about 50 artists. But that was the indication of how big things were getting.

Slayer, we had done two records—well I guess four: the *Show No Mercy* and *Hell Awaits* records, and then the two EPs, *Live Undead* and *Haunting the Chapel*—and they started to get pretty big. We were talking to major labels, they were descending upon them like crazy and I was helping the band decide.

They eventually signed with Rick Rubin's label, but certainly the fact that here's this band that had come from nowhere, this scene had come from nowhere, and all of a sudden you've got Rick Rubin and people from Capitol calling you on your phone going, "Hey, we're interested in this band." It was pretty crazy.

For me, when they left, it's kind of bittersweet because you love the band and you've done all this work to get them to this point. But then again you realize I'm just some young kid who has this label. I don't really know what I'm doing and I can't provide for these bands what the majors can do. So for me it was hey, this is a great thing for these guys to take that next step, that next level. Metallica was doing it, and all these bands were doing it, and it kind of blows your minds. I remember being in meetings with some of these big major labels, like wow, I'm actually sitting in this office with these big wig guys. It was pretty crazy.

So that certainly was the next level. We'd gotten it as far as we could in the underground and the underground was becoming beyond an underground at that point. When Slayer left and signed with the majors, hey, that was a huge thing. It was kind of weird when it happened. It's almost like you're ending a relationship to some degree where things happen. I mean, look, all any of us ever wanted was for the scene to get bigger, and that was clearly the way it was going to get bigger, so it had to happen.

And it got bigger because the music was good. I can't really say anything other than it was good. All these bands were good, and they were making very good, important records. Whether it was Slayer, Metallica, Sacred Reich, Exodus, Flotsam and Jetsam, suddenly there's this huge scene of bands making this really great music and they're all doing it at a very high level and they're all doing it very well. Any time somebody does something good at a high level, it becomes popular.

That's kind of what happened with the music. And again, I think in that time period—and not just in America but around the world—there were a lot of problems going on. A lot of things happening. I think a lot of these kids gravitated towards the heavy, extreme music that this was, and it was getting popular. Friends would say, "Hey, have you heard this band?" It just naturally gravitated towards this global level, but it was very slow. Now things happen so quickly with the internet, but back then, it took years. But it also seemed kind of fast. It's amazing how it happened. It just seemed like the right music in the right place at the right time, with the right climate to do well.

With these guys moving on, the good thing was, for the most part, I've been friends with all those guys forever. The thing that made it cool, and was another reason those bands became popular, was they're just regular guys. I've been friends with them forever, and Kerry and I still go out to dinner all the time, I see the Metallica guys all the time; I'm still friendly with all of them. It never really wavered on the Metallica relationship. I've been friends with them forever and that never changed because we didn't do a lot of business stuff.

The Slayer thing, there's probably about a year of growing pains for everybody where they left and I didn't really hear too much from them. But after that everything's been great. I've been friends with all these bands forever. We all have that connection of coming from something, and they're all still really good guys.

For me, I'm just a music fan, first and foremost. Secondary is the label thing, but a fan is first and foremost. The friendships and relationships are much more important than any business thing, and I try to keep that. Luckily the bands have been that way too. You keep hearing these stories, and we've been part of them on a couple

levels, where you see people go from nothing to having a lot and they change. They have different friends and they have different people they hang around with, and they change as people, and not in a good way sometimes. And none of these guys did that. They stayed down to earth, grounded, really good guys, they treat their fans well. That's another reason they're so successful—they treat people well.

These bands have been around for over 25 years. You can't not treat people well and still be successful. You have to do it that way, and they've done it. I think the relationship we've had over the years with everybody has been great. It's been fun to be part of the whole thing and to this day, sit around and go how did this all happen?

So I was never bitter about any of that stuff. I knew what my role was. If *Reign in Blood* had come out on Metal Blade it probably would not have sold as many as it did and it might not have been that record. They needed that major push and that major distribution to get to that level. At that point we just couldn't provide it. Luckily things have changed nowadays and it's a bit different. That's where it was. I was never bitter about any of that stuff and we had so many bands leave. It was fine because that's where they needed to go at that point. The only thing that bummed me out was bands that left and didn't become successful because they got caught up in that machine. But the ones that did, more power to them.

Reign in Blood engineer Andy Wallace:

It certainly kicked the energy level of that type of metal up a notch, or more than a notch. I was not doing a lot of metal records at that time—at least not along those lines—

and so when Rick signed on to do that album with them, I wasn't really that aware of their earlier albums until then. Rick came and we talked about it, and then listened to their earlier albums. I was amazed, personally, at the energy of it, especially what ended up being the *Reign in Blood* album. At least from my perspective, it stuck me as being a whole lot faster and more in-your-face and just aggressive than anything I had heard from Metallica or other bands at that time.

Again, I probably wasn't as deep into it, but what I did do was respond, really, to the energy level of it and the precision of it. Dave Lombardo was just magnificent on that album, and that album was not done with a lot of editing and putting together takes. They had been playing those songs live, I imagine, at that time and pretty much had them down.

I'm sure, if I think back, Rick worked on them with certain things. But I think it was more a matter of keeping certain attitudes as opposed to going in and, "Oh no, don't play it this way, do this and do that." I think he pretty much went with what the band had been playing as far

as the music is concerned. But it was so high energy, and also it was very dangerous. I remember when I first listened to it and agreed to do the project, I thought, oh man, my plane's going to crash while I'm flying to LA or my plane's going to hit the studio or something. Because at the time, that was… it was intense. Lyrically and musically.

But I personally really responded to the energy of it. Just the in-your-face energy. And one of the things that really caught me about it and got me really involved, for me it was an opportunity to make a metal record kind of the way I heard it. Because a lot of the metal records that I heard up until that point, they never really sounded the way I felt a metal record could really sound. They tended to be a little thinner on the low end, and a lot of the double kick stuff was like a typewriter. It has a certain thing going on but I always felt the whole thing could just be ballsier and heavier, and also not quite as ambient as some of the records were at that time.

I felt that big can translate to a couple different things. Some people feel that when it sounds like it's in a stadium—the band is out there and there's all this echo around and such—that's legitimate, that's valid. To me, maybe because I grew up playing in bands and worked in a lot of studios out in LA before I had my own about the size of this, so everything was always close by, big to me is when the stuff is just right around your head and loud, you know? But not necessarily terribly ambient.

And Rick and I had been working together on a number of records prior to that, so he already knew where I was coming from and what I liked to do and what just felt natural for me to do. It wasn't so much conscious, like I want to do this record that way. It's just more a matter of a sonic gravity.

So that's what we did on that record. It's not a very ambient record. It's all just right in your face. But the idea was to have the listener kind of be a punching bag and to have it just go "pow, pow, pow" and it did that. You can listen to that album top to bottom and it's relentless. It had that directness, and part of that was the sonic thing. It wasn't like it was this clean, polished-sounding thing. It's very raw and in-your-face, but it's very big. A lot of attention was paid to having the sonics of it, so it had that weight and that aggressiveness rather than just loud and distant. I wanted it to be so you could hear every little rip of the guitar strings right in your ears.

Slayer guitarist Kerry King on working with Rick Rubin:

The funny thing about the Rick Rubin experiment was, of all people, I think he contacted Dave, and Dave wasn't the social dynamo that I'd become, or Hanneman or Tom is. Dave's probably the hardest one to get in touch with, and they connected, and Dave's trying to sell us on, "Hey, I met this guy Rick Rubin, major label, wants to put

out a record of ours." I can't remember how it went down, but it was just ironic that Rick Rubin got in touch with Dave and Dave got us all talking about it.

Because I was probably farthest out of touch with him. I was close with Brian. I still am close with Brian. He's a good friend of mine, and I don't know if I felt like we were betraying him, but at the end of the day you want the record contract that's going to get you national exposure. So it's not just even a pecking order, it's just hopping up the food chain.

And with Rick, I think he was just such a fan and he was a producer and is a producer of a wide variety of things now, and I think he wanted to have a shot at producing Slayer. I looked at it as we have this guy that has a rap label, so to speak, and he's such a metal fan that he wants us on his rap label. So I figured we would get a lot of attention because we were his baby. I'd never talked to him about this, but looking back, I think he wanted to say, "What can I do to Slayer to make them better, being a fan?" And he pretty much produced what we became. From *Reign in Blood*, that was the beginning of what Slayer is today.

And I'll tell you exactly what he did: he took Venom out of it. He took out the reverb. We were such fans of Mercyful Fate and Venom; we didn't know you could do a record without reverb—you emulate your heroes. And that's what he did; he took all of that out and put every song, every instrument right here (points at his head) from beginning to end. At the end of the day we went, "This sounds great." But we didn't go in there with any thoughts of that. I'm sure *he* did, because that's why he wanted to produce Slayer. To make it what he wanted it to be: no frills, no bells and whistles. Here it is, you're either going to like it or hate it. And luckily we wrote good enough songs where people liked it.

Slayer guitarist Jeff Hanneman:
Reign in Blood was when we got a real deal (laughs), when we were on a real label. And I guess we were really excited about it, because what was that album? 28 minutes long? That's when we were back into the speed, back into the ballsy stuff. *Reign in Blood* was a quickie. We just went in and boom, it was done, it was over. I think it took like three weeks. We had everything written before we went in, and practically every song was a fast song.

Metallica guitarist Kirk Hammett:

Oh man, when I first heard *Reign in Blood*, I though like these guys like… fucking hell. How can they be so fucking heavy and so evil and so fucking Satanic? You know, the last time I felt that was

when I first heard the Mercyful Fate EP, you know? The one with "Nuns Have No Fun." I just felt like inspiration, surprise, disgust, total exhilaration. I felt all those emotions when heard *Reign in Blood*. I was like, this is like the apex of heaviness—and Satan. What can I say? I loved it so much, I envied it. I loved it so much, I was envious.

And compared to us, it was like similar visions, different personalities. They had their vision, and it turned out for them and they achieved greatness. We had the same vision, but we had different filters. That's how I see it with us and *Master of Puppets* and Slayer with *Reign in Blood*. I really see those two albums as completely different but completely similar (laughs).

Producer Andy Sneap on *Reign in Blood*:

I think it's quite an organic sounding album when you listen to it now. I think as far as the production goes, there's not any dated production techniques. It's very natural and dry so even now when you put it on, it might sound a bit dull or quiet, but it still holds up.

I think they did a clever thing: what is it, 28 minutes or something like that? They didn't overdo it, they just put the really killer stuff on that album. With bands now, and pressure from labels now, they want 14 songs, 70 minutes worth of music, and it's too long. I think with *Reign in Blood* it was the best of the best, really—short and sweet. It really has stood the test of time, that album.

It's a band right at the peak of its time. I think they were hungry for it, which always comes through with a band. You look at Maiden, Metallica and now Slayer. These guys have been there and done it and it's hard for them to get that aggression back and that hunger back because they're not hungry. They'll sell out an arena if they play it. It's not a difficult job for them any more, and good for them. But back then when these bands were on the second, third album, it was still a struggle for them. They hadn't gotten yet everyday lives back then with wife and kids to go back. Everyone was probably focused on the band all the time, and that's why bands, usually at the second or third albums, they're turning out their classics.

Miller Petrozza from Kreator on his favourite thrash moments of all time: It's probably *Reign in Blood*. It was a mixture of Venom and Metallica, although I think the first thrash record I ever heard was the first Metallica record. And the best one? I couldn't say. I think most of the Slayer and Sepultura records are very good. Destruction's *Eternal Devastation* as well, and I was always a big Celtic Frost fan. I don't know if Tom likes the idea of him being considered thrash. I just read his book; maybe he has a problem, but I think they had thrash moments.

Arch Enemy guitarist Michael Amott:

With Arch Enemy, there's a huge influence from Slayer and Megadeth. They had their own unique sounds, Metallica, Megadeth, Slayer. I think we draw influences from those three. They just sped everything up. Faster, harder, and that appealed to me. I grew up listening to punk and hardcore and then I heard Metallica and saw them wearing Discharge T-shirts or Dave Lombardo wearing a D.R.I. T-shirt, and, oh, that's why they're playing so fast. It really appealed to me that they were blending the superfast hardcore styles with metal riffs, and I was playing guitar at the same time and I was developing. I mastered the hardcore punk style and wanted to kick it up a notch and thrash helped me do that. Then I heard the Megadeth demo and first album, and that was definitely something to aspire to. Dave Mustaine was really taking guitar playing to the next level; stuff like that was just really inspirational growing up.

Arch Enemy guitarist Chris Amott on whether there was anything classical about Slayer:

Jeff and Kerry were using different tonalities, drawing from classical music or something else. I don't know where it comes from. It just sounds very Satanic; so that's what I like about Slayer. Everything connects, the lyrics and the way they play their riffs. I don't think they were listening to classical music. I think they were just trying to find the most sinister sounding notes on the guitar neck, just like Tony Iommi was 20 years or ten years earlier. It kind of connects. When Slayer plays the fast riffs, with the E string, the 16th notes, I guess it kind of sounds like violin, some crazy Rachmaninoff symphony.

So I don't think they were drawing from classical music but there are definitely connections. When my brother played *Reign in Blood* for me the first time, that was intense. The cover looked like it was written in blood and you had the live pics of the guys, the lyrics… I was still shocked by metal. Can you sing about that? Can you sing about Nazis and serial killers? And everything was awesome, the whole package. So it just took over my brain for a few years.

October 31 – December 7, 1986. Slayer embark on the first leg of their incendiary *Reign in Blood* tour, two dates in Canada but mostly across the Midwest and eastern seaboard of America, mostly with Overkill as opener. A second leg into 1987 would have them wiping the floor with W.A.S.P., signifying a triumph of thrash over more traditional and dated fare, no matter how forced and hollow the imagery at play.

Slayer guitarist Kerry King:

At that point we were continuing what we started with *Show No Mercy*. We went out and did a US tour, and then we did *Haunting the Chapel*. We did *Hell Awaits* and we did another US tour. So *Reign in Blood* was just an extension of that. We were building an audience that we had already built. And on *Reign in Blood*, we did a tour with W.A.S.P.; we did a month on our own, and then we did a month with W.A.S.P..

We did better business than W.A.S.P. did, which surprised the shit out of me, considering that we were an underground band, and W.A.S.P. at that time... you know, they had "Animal (Fuck like a Beast)" and they were making waves. But everywhere we played, you know, we played 1500-, 2000-seaters, theaters and then clubs, with them. I thought they were doing arenas (laughs). And they weren't. In fact, they couldn't even do the clubs we were doing.

You know, because we would get done and everybody would leave. And that happened to them on the entire tour. So it kind of put reality into perspective for me. Because what you see and hear on television is not really what goes on in real life. You hear about W.A.S.P, whoa, W.A.S.P. this, W.A.S.P. that, they're playing here, they're playing there, they're big, they're hot! And we'd play a club for 500 kids, and we'd get off the stage, and everybody would leave.

And that put reality into perspective for me, because I thought this band was a big band. I thought cool! We're going to tour with this band, we're going to play for thousands of people and we were playing in front of our crowd. At times, it was 2000, 3000 kids, but they were our kids. They weren't there to see W.A.S.P. They were there to throw shit at them (laughs). And Blackie, everybody knows him and how he is. So yeah, I'm sure it burned him. It burned a huge hole in his ego. I know it did.

Credits

As with my similar New Wave of British Heavy Metal timeline project, the idea here was to make thorough use of my personal interview archive. Additional quotes are courtesy of Sam Dunn, Steve Newton, Todd K. Smith, the gang at MetalRules.com and the magazine archives of Brave Words & Bloody Knuckles and M.E.A.T., courtesy of Tim Henderson and Drew Masters, respectively.

Photo Credits

Front cover shot of Kerry King is by Kevin Estrada (www.kevinestrada.com), with the back cover shot of Overkill by Rudy Childs. Massive thanks as well to Hector Kirkwood and the fine thrash scholarship he has demonstrated with his site metallipromo.com. Not only have I been able to fine-tune a few dates through his service to thrash there, but he's granted kind permission for use of images as well.

Design Credit

The visual splendidness of this book was created by one Eduardo Rodriguez, who can be reached at eduardobwbk@gmail.com.

Special Thanks

Gord Kirchin, yes the one and only, legendary lead singer of Piledriver (*Metal Inquisition*, 1984 and *Stay Ugly*, 1986), as well as Convict, Dogs with Jobs and The Exalted Piledriver, has been helping me with copy-editing for a few books now, doing a capable job of reducing typo counts. Everything you would want in a dependable friend, Gord is, like me, a natural explainer.

About the Author

At approximately 7900 (with over 7000 appearing in his books), Martin has unofficially written more record reviews than anybody in the history of music writing across all genres. Additionally, Martin has penned approximately 67 books on hard rock, heavy metal, classic rock and record collecting. He was Editor In Chief of the now retired Brave Words & Bloody Knuckles, Canada's foremost metal publication for 14 years, and has also contributed to Revolver, Guitar World, Goldmine, Record Collector, bravewords.com, lollipop.com and hardradio.com, with many record label band bios and liner notes to his credit as well. Additionally, Martin has been a regular contractor to Banger Films, having worked for two years as researcher on the award-wining documentary *Rush: Beyond the Lighted Stage*, on the writing and research team for the 11-episode *Metal Evolution* and on the 10-episode Rock Icons, both for VH1 Classic. Additionally, Martin is the writer of the original metal genre chart used in *Metal: A Headbanger's Journey* and throughout the *Metal Evolution* episodes. Martin currently resides in Toronto and can be reached through martinp@inforamp.net or www.martinpopoff.com.

Caught in a Mosh: The Golden Era of Thrash (2017)
Metal Collector: Gathered Tales from Headbangers (2017)
Rush: Album by Album (2017)
Beer Drinkers and Hell Raisers: The Rise of Motörhead (2017)
Hit the Lights: The Birth of Thrash (2017)
Popoff Archive – 4: Classic Rock (2017)
Popoff Archive – 3: Hair Metal (2017)
Popoff Archive – 2: Progressive Rock (2016)
Popoff Archive – 1: Doom Metal (2016)
Rock the Nation: Montrose, Gamma and Ronnie Redefined (2016)
Punk Tees: The Punk Revolution in 125 T-Shirts (2016)
Metal Heart: Aiming High with Accept (2016)
Ramones at 40 (2016)
Time and a Word: The Yes Story (2016)
Kickstart My Heart: A Mötley Crüe Day-by-Day (2015)
This Means War: The Sunset Years of the NWOBHM (2015)
Wheels of Steel: The Explosive Early Years of the NWOBHM (2015)
Swords and Tequila: Riot's Classic First Decade (2015)
Who Invented Heavy Metal? (2015)
Sail Away: Whitesnake's Fantastic Voyage (2015)
Live Magnetic Air: The Unlikely Saga of the Superlative Max Webster (2014)
Steal Away the Night: An Ozzy Osbourne Day-by-Day (2014)
The Big Book of Hair Metal (2014)
Sweating Bullets: The Deth and Rebirth of Megadeth (2014)
Smokin' Valves: A Headbanger's Guide to 900 NWOBHM Records (2014)
The Art of Metal (co-edit with Malcolm Dome; 2013)
2 Minutes to Midnight: An Iron Maiden Day-By-Day (2013)
Metallica: The Complete Illustrated History (2013); update and reissue (2016)
Rush: The Illustrated History (2013); update and reissue (2016)
Ye Olde Metal: 1979 (2013)
Scorpions: Top of the Bill (2013); updated and reissued as Wind of Change: The Scorpions Story (2016)
Epic Ted Nugent (2012)
Fade to Black: Hard Rock Cover Art of the Vinyl Age (2012)
It's Getting Dangerous: Thin Lizzy 81-12 (2012)
We Will Be Strong: Thin Lizzy 76-81 (2012)
Fighting My Way Back: Thin Lizzy 69-76 (2011)
The Deep Purple Royal Family: Chain of Events '80 – '11 (2011)

The Deep Purple Royal Family: Chain of Events Through '79 (2011); reissued as The Deep Purple Family Year by Year (to 1979) (2016)
Black Sabbath FAQ (2011)
The Collector's Guide to Heavy Metal: Volume 4: The '00s (2011; co-authored with David Perri)
Goldmine Standard Catalog of American Records 1948 – 1991, 7th Edition (2010)
Goldmine Record Album Price Guide, 6th Edition (2009)
Goldmine 45 RPM Price Guide, 7th Edition (2009)
A Castle Full of Rascals: Deep Purple '83 – '09 (2009)
Worlds Away: Voivod and the Art of Michel Langevin (2009)
Ye Olde Metal: 1978 (2009)
Gettin' Tighter: Deep Purple '68 – '76 (2008)
All Access: The Art of the Backstage Pass (2008)
Ye Olde Metal: 1977 (2008)
Ye Olde Metal: 1976 (2008)
Judas Priest: Heavy Metal Painkillers (2007)
Ye Olde Metal: 1973 to 1975 (2007)
The Collector's Guide to Heavy Metal: Volume 3: The Nineties (2007)
Ye Olde Metal: 1968 to 1972 (2007)
Run For Cover: The Art of Derek Riggs (2006)
Black Sabbath: Doom Let Loose (2006)
Dio: Light Beyond the Black (2006)
The Collector's Guide to Heavy Metal: Volume 2: The Eighties (2005)
Rainbow: English Castle Magic (2005)
UFO: Shoot Out the Lights (2005)
The New Wave of British Heavy Metal Singles (2005)
Blue Öyster Cult: Secrets Revealed! (2004); update and reissue (2009); updated and reissued as Agents of Fortune: The Blue Oyster Cult Story (2016)
Contents Under Pressure: 30 Years of Rush at Home & Away (2004)
The Top 500 Heavy Metal Albums of All Time (2004)
The Collector's Guide to Heavy Metal: Volume 1: The Seventies (2003)
The Top 500 Heavy Metal Songs of All Time (2003)
Southern Rock Review (2001)
Heavy Metal: 20th Century Rock and Roll (2000)
The Goldmine Price Guide to Heavy Metal Records (2000)
The Collector's Guide to Heavy Metal (1997)
Riff Kills Man! 25 Years of Recorded Hard Rock & Heavy Metal (1993)

See martinpopoff.com for complete details and ordering information.

In the intensities in ten cities follow-up to Popoff's celebrated New Wave of British Heavy Metal trilogy (*Smokin' Valves, Wheels of Steel and This Means War*) along with *Hit the Lights: The Birth of Thrash*, Martin now offers all the tales of the bands and records that built thrash metal into a juggernaut circa 1983 to 1986.

In the words of those who were there plus the music-makers themselves, this is the story of records like *Ride the Lightning, Killing is My Business, Spreading the Disease* and *Reign in Blood*, along with contributions from Anvil, Exciter, Voivod, Overkill, Pantera, Exodus, Celtic Frost and the German contingent of Sodom, Kreator and Destruction. Multiple members of all the above bands get their say, along with the industry giants that sent the records into the shops. The end result is the ultimate history of thrash's most blessed and blasted years, a golden time for metal that forms the bedrock of the thriving thrash scene of today.

About the author:

Martin has penned 67 books on hard rock, heavy metal, classic rock and record collecting. He was Editor in Chief of the now retired *Brave Words & Bloody Knuckles*, Canada's foremost metal publication in print for 14 years, and has also contributed to *Revolver, Guitar World, Goldmine, Record Collector, bravewords.com, lollipop.com* and *hardradio.com*. Additionally, Martin has been a regular contractor to Banger Films, having worked for two years as researcher on the award-wining documentary *Rush: Beyond the Lighted Stage*, on the writing and research team for the 11-episode *Metal Evolution* and on the ten-episode *Rock Icons*, both for VH1 Classic. Additionally, Martin is the writer of the original metal genre chart used in *Metal: A Headbanger's Journey* and throughout the *Metal Evolution* episodes. Martin currently resides in Toronto and can be reached through martinpopoff.com.

Design by Eduardo Rodriguez
inkfusiononline@gmail.com
Front cover photo © Kevin Estrada;
kevinestrada.com
Back cover photo © Rudy Childs

US: $: $24.95
Canada: $27.95
ISBN 978-0-9952533-5-3